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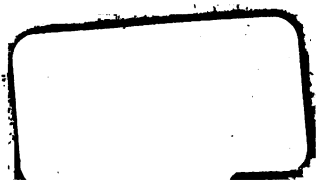
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Contest

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7. 10. 1915

THE
STATE OF THE NATION;

IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS,

TO HIS GRACE

THE
DUKE OF BEDFORD.

By JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

The English constitution is, in fact, a two-fold and admirable system of CIVIL and MILITARY polity, most happily combined; whereby these two characters, like the faculties of intellectual ability and bodily force in man, are inseparably interwoven, and constitute a complete state, or free government.

APPEAL, CIV. AND MIL. ON ENG. CON.

The experience of many hundred years hath shewn that by preserving this constitution inviolate, or by drawing it back to the principles on which it was originally founded, whenever it shall be made to swerve from them, we may secure to ourselves and to our latest posterity the possession of that liberty, which we have so long enjoyed.

BOLINGBROKE'S DISSERT. UPON PARTIES.

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TO THE
DUKE OF BEDFORD.

LETTER I.

MY LORD,

THE blood of a *Russell*, shed for his country's freedom, was not, we believe, shed in vain. The remembrance of such an event might not, it is true, have been necessary towards forming the *Russells* of the present day, to what we have seen them; because morality, a sound understanding, and the right exercise of that understanding, ought to be of themselves sufficient to make a man the friend of liberty, and a promoter of the happiness of his species: but doubtless a zest is given to patriotism, when it recalls to public recollection an illustrious ancestor, who, for the eminence of his virtue, fell a sacrifice to the malice of a tyrant, and the profligacy of his satellites.

I address you, my Lord, and in your person I wish to address whatever is independent and high-minded of the nobility and gentry of our land; whatever there is among them of public spirit, or even of ordinary prudence, or of regard for posterity; since my subject is not only the present *state of the nation*, but to what that nation must rapidly degenerate, unless the counsels of better times be again resorted to; and disregarded, but sound maxims of government be once more revived.

A FREE STATE, IS A STATE SELF-GOVERNED. Such a state suffers not weak or wicked ministers, after proof of incapacity or of perfidy, to continue in the management of its affairs; and consequently, is not likely to

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fall under any great calamity ; much less into a condition to inspire with despondence intelligent and reflecting citizens. But the calamities of *England*, my Lord, are manifold and severe; and despondence is now but too common a feeling among us: and seeing indeed that the magnitude of our difficulties and dangers, and the gloominess of our prospects, are the frequent topics of our ablest statesmen in public debate, we are imperiously called on, not only to make ourselves acquainted with the true *state of the nation*, but also with the real *causes* of that state ; that so we may rightly understand by what means our evils can be removed, and our condition amended. As bad ministers cannot long make part of a good government, if evil government have been of long continuance, then we shall assuredly find, that, bad as the conduct of ministers may have been, their dismissal will be a point of but secondary consideration, for their past mismanagements must be considered as a *necessary effect*, more properly than as a *sole cause*? But indeed, when the state machine is out of order, our primary consideration ought ever to be, the CONSTITUTION of our government;—that on which it depends, whether we are, or are not, members of “A FREE STATE?” or do, or do not, enjoy political liberty—that *only possible security against misgovernment* !

It certainly is not possible to know *the state of the nation*, unless we know whether it be, or be not, governed agreeably to the principles of the CONSTITUTION : it is not possible to understand *the state of the nation*, unless we examine in what degree, more or less, or whether at all, we are members of ‘A FREE STATE,’ actually possessing, and practically exercising the rights of free men : nor without ascertaining what, or where, are the deficiencies (if any) in our freedom. Such then are the ideas on which the present inquiry will be conducted; and I think it right to give in the outset this explanation, as well as to apprise my readers, that strong as is my hostility to the present minister, I date not the origin of the worst evils of the state, from the period of his elevation to power; but from sources anterior to his existence; sources however which, in writing for truth and freedom, for our coun-

try and posterity, it is necessary to trace. But, under all the circumstances relative to that anterior existence of evils, their continuance under his administration, so far from furnishing matter of extenuation, must heap coals of fire on his head. "Where there is a regular scheme of operations carried on, it is the *system*, and not any individual person who acts in it, that is truly dangerous." ¹

But if a minister "puts himself in the way to obstruct reformation, then the faults in the system instantly become his own." ²

I mean not to be elaborate, but rather to sketch than paint; rather to hint than argue; and indeed this whole letter will not be so long as many parliamentary speeches on much inferior topics: if in the miseries of our condition there be not arguments to convince, nor in the magnitude of our danger eloquence to influence the will, in vain should I attempt to persuade.

While the *state of the nation* is under contemplation, the subject naturally branches into *internal* and *external*; but as on the *form* of a government, and on the ability or inability, the integrity or the perfidy with which it is executed, more than on external circumstances, depends prosperity or the reverse, so the *internal state of the nation* most demands our attention. Foreign wars, how much soever they come under the description of *external* circumstances, will generally be found to have originated in some *internal* defect or vice; and are in no small degree prolific of *internal* evil.

The two foreign wars which are the most prominent features of the present disastrous reign, meaning that with *America*, and the present war, (considering it to have commenced in 1793) and which have in an eminent degree contributed to the present *state of the nation*, are cases in point as strong as history can afford. It is not merely to avoid complexity in my statement, but from the nature and reason of the case, that the last mentioned of these wars is here considered as still in existence. Had indeed our ministers, together with a

¹ Burke on the cause of the present discontents. 2d. edit. 1770, p. 39.

² Ibid. p. 13.

discovery of their error in going to war, united the virtue of curing our *internal* ills, they might in my humble judgment, long since have negotiated a safe, an honourable and a durable peace. ¹

Defensive as the present war has long been, and sick of it as all parties are become, men are restrained by different motives from freely speaking their opinions, or taking decisive measures for putting an end to it. There is a natural feeling which disinclines a brave nation that is at war, from expressing a desire for peace; when it cannot be made with triumph and glory; and we are as naturally backward in making acknowledgments, which a vain enemy would be flattered by hearing. There is also a natural as well as prudent reluctance in not unnecessarily, and before it becomes a positive duty, exposing the weakness of public counsels. But the present comparative silence and inaction of the great body of the nation, chiefly results from the state of parties, and from a deficiency of magnanimity among that considerable proportion of the higher classes in society, who, by fallacious appearances, fraud and delusion, were once drawn into the vortex of the present minister's political machinations; and who, notwithstanding the consciousness they must now feel of having been imposed upon, the disappointment of their expectations, and their ultimate discovery of the wide difference there is, between an accomplished orator and a profound statesman, have not yet the candour to shew a change of sentiment, by a change of conduct.

From such causes, among others, it is, that the present war has not yet received the final reprobating stamp of public opinion; and indeed it would more become the nation, and would probably sooner produce a peace, if instead of clamouring against the war, it were to raise its voice in reprobation of the minister with whom it originated, but who can neither conduct it, nor conclude it. When we complain of ministers, there are courtly persons who talk of a royal prerogative, which, in respect to the appointment, or the continuance, or the change of ministers, is omnipotent; and

¹ See England's *Egis* xxvii, 58, 152, 158.

they would have us believe, that this prerogative is not of a political, but a personal character. But the constitution and law of *England* know nothing of *personal* prerogatives; and if political, or legal prerogatives, be exercised "to the grievance or dishonour of the kingdom, the parliament will call the advisers to a just and severe account;" for "if discretionary power be abused to the public detriment, such prerogative is exercised in an *unconstitutional* manner." ¹ And the minister who should hold his office to the public injury, *in defiance of public opinion*, must unquestionably be considered as the king's adviser to continue him, and highly criminal as such; and to hold his office after a solemn address of either house of parliament, would as unquestionably be an impeachable offence. Whenever therefore addresses shall manifest to the king, that in the opinion of his people, the continuing in his service any of his ministers, would be "to the grievance or dishonour of the kingdom," we may be well assured, his Majesty would remove such ministers, without waiting for addresses of a more solemn nature.

Now, with regard to the first of the two disastrous wars of this reign, that with *America*, the passions and prejudices which gave it birth, and so long continued it "to the grievance and dishonour of the kingdom," having now subsided, the verdict of the nation, at this time decidedly condemns that war as having been, on the part of *England*, glaringly unjust in its principle, and equally unwise in the view of its policy; a pregnant instance for shewing the insolidity of the arguments in favour of reposing confidence in men, merely because our sovereign has made them ministers. The time however came, when the people, ceasing to have confidence in the author and conductor of the *American* war, their opinion was made known to his Majesty, and the minister was removed. In the opinion of Mr. *Burke*, there is a "necessity of having some better reason, in a free country, and a free parliament, for supporting the ministers of the crown, than that short one, 'That the king has thought proper to appoint them.'

1 Blacks. Com. I. 252, 253, 272.

"There is something very courtly in this. But it is a principle pregnant with all sorts of mischief, in a constitution like ours, to turn the views of active men from the country to the court."* Let then those inert children of patriotism, who now look on the removal of the present minister, during the continuance of the present reign, as a hopeless case, consider what sort of a compliment they pay the *English* constitution, and the *English* nation; and let them no longer talk nonsense, as an excuse for idleness.

* Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents: p. 46. Ed. 1770.

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

THE true cause of either of these wars cannot be rightly explained, nor can we beneficially understand how they have jointly occasioned the present *State of the Nation*, without adverting to those *principles of government, which sprung up near the throne, from the moment on which it was ascended by his present Majesty*; principles which, in the same quarter, continue to this day in full force.

The defenceless condition to which *English Liberty*, and consequently *English Property*, through a decay of REPRESENTATION, was, in fact, at the time of the accession reduced, was but too clearly seen by those to whom we owe the principles of government to which I allude; and it required no more than their measure of capacity to discover, that here was ready prepared to their hands a lever, whereby, whatever stood in the way of their designs might be overturned, provided only those principles could be made to take root in the royal mind. "PARLIAMENT was indeed the great object of all these politics, the end at which they aimed, as well as the *instrument* by which they were to oper-

"etc." To the double object, therefore of prejudicing the royal mind, and making parliament their instrument, all their art was directed, and all their powers of insinuation were applied. The two preceding sovereigns of the house of Brunswick, had for the most part kept near their persons, and taken into their counsels, distinguished individuals of those illustrious families, who, on constitutional principles, had favoured the call of their family to the throne ; as indeed persons holding such principles, seemed the most proper supports of a throne so founded.

This whig ascendancy, was artfully represented as eclipsing royalty ; and, indeed every thing among the ancient families savouring of united action, or of superior claims to consultation, was misrepresented as an encroachment on prerogative ; and it was insinuated, that a king was no king, unless, according to the dictates of his *personal* will, he could elevate or depress, advance or discard, his ministers and official servants at his pleasure. How far a rooted prejudice against the persons of the Whigs, and by an easy transition against the principles of whigism, was in fact thus implanted, can only be judged of by *experience* ; but certain it is, that whig, or constitutional principles, have not found favour at court at any period of the present reign ; and how long any whig minister, who did not abandon his principles, has been able to keep in place, need not be pointed out.

In a prince who receives wrong impressions, there may be no blame ; opinion is involuntary ; and indeed, considering the education of princes, it seems a sort of miracle, when they think justly on the subject of their own power : but heavy lies responsibility on those who, either originally cause, or traitorously continue, any violation of public right, which deprives the constitution of its conservative and controuling powers ; as well as on those, who, under such circumstances of the constitution, through flattery and falsehood, pervert the minds of princes, so as to endanger the very foundation of a good government, to "*the grievance and dishonour of the kingdom.*"

1 Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents, p. 66.

Those who took an early part in depreciating the natural and proper supports of legitimate sovereignty, in our limited government, and in misrepresenting them as improper checks and incroachments on the *personal* prerogatives of the sovereign, were pleased to stile themselves *The king's friends*, although others thought them *the king's worst enemies*. But the efficient few, to whose sycophancy and insidious whisperings, the secret springs of court counsels were attributed, were not unaptly denominated *the faction behind the throne*.

Wise and generous statesmen, my Lord, contemplate the nation they govern as a moral soil, to be cultivated for the production of order, virtue, industry, art, science, genius, freedom, and happiness; ever considering *taxation*, beyond what is necessary to those ends, as an evil; and *peace*, as a blessing to be sought and cherished with a pious care and solicitude: and it is material to observe, that it is not so much in a nation of superior science and virtue, as under a government of superior freedom, that such statesmen both naturally spring up, and as naturally become selected. Even in our own days, and in a nation by no means equal to our own in intellectual attainments, nor its superior in moral excellence, we have seen three such statesmen in succession, filling an uninterrupted period of more than twenty years, chosen to preside in quality of supreme magistratè over several millions of men, and the largest territory in the world, in the persons of *Washington*, *Adams*,¹ and *Jefferson*; and, when we reflect on *the genuine and substantial representation in their parliaments*, which the *American* people enjoy, it is extremely difficult to imagine, how any statesman of a different description should ever be placed at the head of their affairs.

Of an opposite character to such men as these, there is a gross-minded, and sordid kind of state rulers, for—statesmen they cannot be called,—who contemplate the moral condition of a people, with no other view than that of securing their *obedience*; and the intellectual or physical capacities of a nation, no otherwise

¹ See his character in de Rochfaucault Liancourt's Travels. II. p. 124.

than as they can be made productive of *taxes* and *mercenary soldiers*; of such state rulers, *war* is the favourite employment, because to them and their supporters it is gainful. In whatever country men of this stamp bear sway, there can be no such thing, be forms and appearances what they may, as real legislative representation

Immediately after the peace of 1763, the *faction behind the throne*, immoral and short sighted, greedy and rash, eagerly sought to establish an extensive and fruitful scheme of revenue, by *taxing America in the parliament of the mother country*; in which the colonists had not any representation;¹ and the system in the year following was still improved upon by the passing of their famous *Stamp Act*;² when, in consequence of the tempest which thereupon immediately blew from across the *Atlantic*, these snail-like spoilers, whose feelers were then more tender and sensible than they have since been, instantly shruuk back within their shell, until the storm should blow over, and they might again sally forth to devour.

But, that the consistency of the faction might be preserved, and the *Whigs* be betrayed into measures that should at once injure their own reputation as friends of liberty, and sanction the favourite system, a hypocritical affectation was played off at court, as if the faction and their principles had fallen into disfavour, and the reins of government were put into the hands of the Marquis of *Rockingham*. The new ministry, intent on favouring freedom by substantial acts, and to that end not even refusing to flatter despotism by what they might think mere empty words, readily accompanied their repeal of the *Stamp Act* with the passing of the *Declaratory Act*;³ by which means, in the same breath that they denied the *expediency*, they asserted the *right*, of an *English* parliament to tax an *American* people. Thus were the *Whigs* not only made the cat's paw for putting out the colonial fire, but duped also into the fatal measure, of laying down by act of parliament, a false and

1 See 4 Geo. III. c. 15; also *Appeal civ. and mil. on Constitution*, p. 9. 2 5 Geo. III. c. 12. 3 6 Geo. III. c. 12.

tyrannous principle, equally serviceable for subverting the liberties, either of *America* or of *England*, the colonies, or the mother country, as opportunities should present themselves; whereby *the faction behind the throne*, and their allies *the faction of the Boroughs*, might be gratified with the plander of their country.

LETTER III.

MY LORD,

IT may not be unworthy of your Grace's observation, how dangerous it is for the real friends of liberty ever to repose political and unreserved confidence in men, however able or specious, however learned or apparently moral, if there be rooted in the heart a bigotted attachment to arbitrary principles of government. Lord *Rockingham* had at this time in his confidence, one, who was an adroit reconciler of contradictions. The political adventurer to whom I allude, whose inmost soul was adverse to the rights and liberties of his species, had unfortunately been inlisted into the *Whig* corps, with whose genuine creed his consequently was at variance. Although this gentleman, was at that time nothing higher than the ministers private secretary;¹ yet, from his extraordinary abilities, had we not his own subsequent declaration, it may easily be believed, that "*in the counsels of 1766, he had his full share,*"² and particularly in framing an act which was the very expression of his own sentiments, and according to the manner of his own policy. I can-

¹ See his Speech on 19th April, 1774, p. 56.

² The reference to Mr. *Burke's* authority for these words is mislaid, but see also his speech on 19th. of April, 1774, p. 96. "I honestly and solemnly declare, I have in all seasons adhered to the system of 1766."

not attribute the *Declaratory Act*, asserting that which is the very compendium of despotism, to the spontaneous motion of Lord *Rockingham's* own mind; nor can I believe, that, unless he had been acted upon by one who had acquired an irresistible ascendant over his judgment, he could have made such a compromise with *the faction behind the throne*: and the event made it certain, that the compromise was a mere error in judgment on a question in the science of government, and not a sacrifice of principle for keeping his place; for, no sooner had he got *the faction behind the throne* out of their *American* scrape, and through the evil counsel of a friend, whose fundamental principle of government and theirs was precisely the same, laid the foundations they wanted for their future proceedings, than *they* instantly, and with very little ceremony, removed him and his friends from the ministry; to make room for men more in favour at court. A successor in the Treasury superseded him on the 2d. day of August in that year.

Things in *America*, were now, however, for some time suffered to go on without any new irritation, while the people there could not but view with a jealous eye, the unqualified assertion of the *Declaratory Act*, and while the court faction here were again preparing for a revival of their scheme with as much wickedness, as in calculating their means, they betrayed a want of knowledge and discernment. It is plain however, that the war with *America*, which afterwards followed, had its origin in *those principles of government which sprung up near the throne, at the time of his Majesty's accession*; principles which have ever since been prevalent, and, as already noticed, continue to this day in full force. But, not intending to go into any historical detail, suffice it here to say, that the people of *English America*, descendants of *Englishmen*, and prizing the *English Constitution* then in their possession, somewhat more than it has since been prized by *Englishmen* themselves, had the virtue to resist; and that that virtue received its reward; for by their resistance they secured on the most solid foundations that liberty, which a base and corrupt faction in this country, lured by the

prospect of *American* plunder, attempted to wrest from them. Nor shall I farther indulge in a transition which here naturally presents itself, than merely to notice the transfer which has since been made by *the faction behind the throne* of the system of war and pillage, from the strong-minded *Americans* to the feeble-minded *Asiatics*.

If it shall any more be said, that the *American* war, was in its outset the war of the people, nor became unpopular until it became disastrous, let it be replied, that the people have been peculiarly unfortunate, to have been first *robbed of a constitutional representation*, and then traduced for becoming the victim of delusions imposed upon them by a corrupt parliament, in league with a corrupt minister, aided by troops of literary hirelings and dependents, paid with the people's money, for boldly asserting falsehoods, the very opposites of facts, and insidiously inculcating false principles, for betraying them into an acquiescence in the measures of that truly machiavelian faction.

How, comparatively, the rulers of the two countries, *England* and *America*, have since employed themselves, the reader may in some degree imagine to himself, by comparing together the latest financial statements of Mr. Pitt and of Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Pitt, by heaping war upon war, is obliged to exhibit a statement in which it appears, that all sources of taxation upon consumption of every kind, and every species of expenditure, are so exhausted, that he is obliged to break in upon and abridge expenditure itself, by taking for the use of the Exchequer, after all other possible taxes, a twentieth part of every man's estate,¹ whether real or personal, until his compound taxation far exceeds (and now for supporting the war, is greatly more than double) *the whole rental of the soil*: and he can produce as I apprehend a *code of taxation*, now occupying in the statutes at large more space than all the rest of the general statute laws of the realm put together, from *magna charta* to the *revolution*. On grievously adding to the already grievous stamp duties on law proceedings, this man of stone, this marble hearted monster of

1 Now considerably augmented by a new tax.

injustice, coolly spoke of it as promoting *public morality*, by discouraging litigiousness. Yes: litigiousness must indeed be at an end, when, through the enormous expence of law, the weak in purse shall universally be given up as a prey to the strong!

Such are the fruits of *A Court and Rotten Borough system of Representation*; which I cannot so well contrast with the natural effects of a genuine Constitutional system of Representation; as in the words of Mr. Jefferson, who on the 4th of March, 1805, spoke to the two houses of the *American Congress*, as follows;

* * * * *

"At home, fellow citizens, you best know whether you have done well or ill. The suppression of unnecessary offices, of useless establishments and expences, enabled us to *discontinue our internal taxes*. These, covering our land with officers, and opening our doors to their intrusions, had already begun that process of domiciliary vexation, which, once entertained, is scarcely to be restrained from reaching successively, every article of produce and of property."

* * * * *

"The remaining revenue on the consumption of foreign articles, is paid chiefly by those who can afford to add *foreign luxuries* to domestic comforts. Being collected in our sea-board and frontiers only, and incorporated with the transactions of our mercantile citizens, it may be the pleasure and pride of an *American* to ask, what farmer, what mechanic, what labourer, *ever sees a tax-gatherer in the United States?* These considerations enable us to support the current expences of the government, to fulfil contracts with foreign nations, to extinguish the native right of soil within our limits, to *extend those limits*,¹ and to apply such a surplus to our public

1 It cost *England*, by not being represented in her own legislature, a bloody war, and above *one hundred and twenty millions of pounds sterling*, to get rid of the present *United States*; but those States, by being so represented, can acquire the whole country of *Louisiana*, half as extensive as their own immense territory, without any war, and without any expence that occasions an internal tax of a single farthing!

“ debts, as places at a short day their final redemption;
 “ and that redemption once effected, the revenue
 “ thereby liberated may, by a just repartition among
 “ the states, and a corresponding *amendment of the*
 “ *constitution*, be applied in time of peace, to rivers,
 “ canals, roads, arts, manufactures, education, and
 “ other great objects within each state. In time of
 “ war (if injustice by ourselves or others must sometime
 “ produce wars) increased as the same revenue will be,
 “ by increased population and consumption, and aided
 “ by other resources *reserved for that crisis*, it may
 “ meet within the year all the expences of the year,
 “ without encroaching on *the rights of future genera-*
 “ *tions*, by burthening them with the debts of the past.
 “ War will then be but a suspension of useful works;
 “ and a return to a state of peace, a return to the pro-
 “ gress of improvement.”

I am not, my Lord, blind to certain advantages on the side of *America*, but still, from the very statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself, respecting the operations of the sinking fund, statements that cannot be contradicted, (but by an honest statesman might be greatly improved,) ¹ it results, that, provided you could have only PEACE, your whole national debt might be extinguished in a single generation. What then, if I may be indulged in a short digression, are the means of *obtaining and preserving* PEACE? The universal answer I presume will be, *a strong government* and an *able ministry*. But then comes another question: what mean we by a *strong government*? Now, to this question, two very different answers will be given. The *Bub Doddingtons* of the day, are at this very moment telling us, we must put the direction of our affairs into the hands of those men who, by their own boroughs, and those of their connections, can irresistibly command the decisions of the house of commons; that is, who, by usurpation and faction, can confer on themselves *absolute power*; and that party leaders, who have hitherto been in hostility to each other, must shake

1 Facts, by W. Morgan, Esq. F. R. S.

hands; and there must also be a suitable distribution of talents for managing the two houses of parliament. Then, say they, we shall have a *strong government*, in which the continental powers can confide for a consistent plan of co-operation; then we shall have alliances on which we can depend, for combined efforts to reduce the enormous power of *France*; and then, in due time, we may expect such victories in *Italy*, in *Switzerland*, and in the low countries, as will reduce the power, and exhaust the resources of *France*, until she will accept of peace on terms consistent with the safety of the other powers of Europe.

But is not this to insult and to mock us? When, since *England* was *England*, was there ever such unanimity in parliament in support of the ministry, as during the late confederacy against *France*? When was there ever such treasure remitted to her allies? When such subsidies sent a begging round *Europe* for armies? And are we desired to act all this over again, without a pretence that we have now a better prospect of succeeding by such means, than in the former trial?

But, my Lord, there is a gross fallacy in the very foundation of this reasoning. These wretched men, whose meanness of soul chains down their understandings, who, for ever surrounded with the impure and muddy atmosphere of corrupt policy, can see nothing beyond such despicable factious operations, or who mean to deceive us by the ambiguity of a word, here confound two things which are totally distinct; namely, the *government*, and the *ministry*. I will avoid this confusion of ideas, and state my own meaning, when I speak of a *strong government*. It can only be produced by a restoration of the *CONSTITUTION*, in both its branches, *civil* and *military*; and when so restored, a *strong ministry*, if there be any ability in the country, will follow as a necessary consequence. In the present state of the representation of the people in parliament, we know by dire experience, that the strength of the ministry is weakness to the government, and debasement and misery to the nation. Although no man was so averse to a constitutional representation of the people as Mr. *Burke*, yet no man has *incidentally* more

strongly shewn its necessity. "Never," says he "were ministers better supported in parliament. Parliamentary support comes and goes with office, totally regardless of the man, or the merit. *Is government strengthened?* It grows weaker and weaker; the popular torrent gains upon it every hour. Let us learn from our experience. It is not *support* that is wanting to government, but *reformation*."¹ And I shall here also say with Mr. *Burke*, "until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for judging more systematically upon their conduct, ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations." "Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured."²

Mr. *Burke's* object in saying all this was completely factious. He aimed at nothing more than to raise a popular cry, for forcing his own party into power: but I repeat it, in hopes of restoring the people themselves to that power, which constitutionally belongs to them; and to recover which is worth their best exertions.

With reference to the other continental nations, I will farther say with Mr. *Burke*, "let the commons in parliament assembled, be one and the same thing with the commons at large. The distinctions that are made to separate them, are unnatural and wicked contrivances. Let them be identified and incorporated. Then indeed they will be truly great. Respecting themselves, they will be respected by THE WORLD."³

Nothing can be more evident, nor is there an historical truth more established than this, that of all governments, that in which the ruler and the people have but one interest and one inclination, is the strongest. Under what form of government then is that cause of strength best provided for? Doubtless under that, where representation is most full, fair, and complete; and the duration of representative power the shortest.

¹ Thoughts on the causes of the present discontents. 2d. ed. by *Dodsley*, p. 104. ² *Ib.* p. 100. ³ See his speech on presenting his plan for official reforms. Ed. 1780. p. 92.

Did foreign courts want confidence in *Edward* the third, *Henry* the fifth, or *Elizabeth*, when parliaments were *sessional*, and when elections were not corrupted? Or do such courts now want confidence in the *American* government, although it consists of *nineteen* separate states, the legislatures of which are annually elected, and even the sovereign of which holds his office only for four years? ¹ But what foreign state could have confidence in a *Richard* the second, who corrupted his parliament, and was at variance with his people? Or what court could confide in such a capricious wretch as *Henry* the 8th. although he managed parliaments until they passed a statute to declare his will as binding as legislative acts?

The present scheme for forming a strong ministry on a rotten borough foundation, and a coalition of discordances, is quite in the spirit of the stupid pretences in the year 1716, in favour of septennial parliaments; nor were such arguments ever heard of, until the true constitutional principle had been set aside, by the statute of 6 *William and Mary*, c. 2. for giving parliaments a *three years continuance*. But the doctrine of the *Bub Doddingtons*, to yield up our liberties, in order to make a *strong government*; necessarily leads to this conclusion; that the greater the despotism of any government, the more will it be, with all other governments, an object of confidence; than which no proposition was ever more absurd. The government of *Prussia* is despotic enough, one would think, for any reasonable politician of the *Bub Doddington* school; but *Prussia* took our subsidies against *France*, and then left us in the lurch: and if despotism be the grand quality recommendatory to diplomatic confidence, we had it in perfection in our late magnanimous ally, the emperor *Paul*; but he too, in a freak, changed sides, and, had he not been assassinated, would probably have been our most vindictive enemy.

It does not therefore appear, that to overturn our constitution, is the right way of *obtaining* or of *preserving*

1. To the original *thirteen* states, there have been added, *Maine*, *Vermont*, *Kentucky*, *Tennessee*, *Columbia*, and *Mississippi*.

ing peace. On the contrary, the wisdom of those ancestors, who planned that constitution, and who cemented its foundations with their patriot blood, is our security, that those ends can no way so effectually be secured, as by restoring it to full vigour and energy. Keeping then in mind, that our constitution consists of two distinct branches, as stated in my motto; I must here by the way observe, that on a certain occasion, its civil fundamental was not so properly *undervalued*, as in fact sold for *power in prompt payment*, by one who was then as grey in deceit and treachery, as he was green in years and the qualities of a mature statesman; whereas its *military* fundamental he might originally have overlooked; but after the extreme danger into which his insidious and desperate counsels had brought his country, had forced it upon the observation of himself and his lately retired colleague, it met with no other attentions than such as prove that, were it possible to raise mercenary soldiers in sufficient abundance for a full security against invasion, and to extort from the people taxes to pay for the military chains of an immense standing army, this branch of their constitution would be as little respected as the other; and our patriot volunteers would be disarmed and treated with public contempt, instead of the private hatred which corrupt and arbitrary ministers must, and undoubtedly do, at this moment bear them.—— Having now spoken of the *American* war, and indulged in reflections on some questions of importance, let us advert to the prominent consequences of that war.

LETTER IV.

MY LORD,

THE lives sacrificed in that unjustifiable war, must have contributed to have weakened our population; but much more so the subsequent emigrations from *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, in consequence of the

increasing difficulties of subsisting. The debt incurred, falls of course the heavier on those who remain; but, in a mere political calculation of permanent ill effects, these are trifles to the fatal consequences to the stamina of our national power and dominion, by having lost to our navy the services of the whole body of AMERICAN SEAMEN. In order to understand the extent of this misfortune, let us compare the statistical accounts that have been published in both countries.

From the end of the war to the end of the last century, a period of eighteen years, the shipping of this country had increased from 1100,000 to 1500,000 tons; while that of *America* in the same period, had increased from 500,000 to 1100,000 tons; or on the part of *England* 400,000 tons, or about 46 per cent. whereas on the part of *America*, the increase was 600,000 tons or 120 per cent. During the four years and a half of the present century, the ratio of relative increase must, I presume, have been much more to the disadvantage of *England*; especially if information I lately received, and which struck a pang to my heart, was correct. It was stated to me by a gentleman, who professed to speak on the authority of a person particularly conversant with the concerns of the shipping interest, that a few weeks ago there was building on the banks of the whole river *Thames*, ONE SINGLE MERCHANT SHIP, and no more.

Now, calculating for the AMERICAN shipping $5\frac{1}{2}$ men to every hundred tons; then their seamen at the close of the century amounted to *sixty thousand five hundred*; 1 having increased since the war, *thirty three thousand*; to which add only a fourth part of that number for the fourth part of eighteen years, the number would then be *sixty eight thousand two hundred and fifty*; but as the increase has doubtless been, not in an arithmetic proportion to the former period; but in a much more operative ratio, the seamen of *America*

1 By a statistical table with which I have been favoured, I find this number to be considerably under the true one; for it appears that in 1799, the number of seamen was 63,500.

ought not now to be estimated at fewer than *eighty thousand*.

Considering the scrutinizing discussions which have so long engaged the public attention, it is not to be imagined that if I should incidentally mention Lord *Melville*, either here or in other parts of this work, it can create any prejudice in the minds of the Judges who are to try him upon specific charges, a judgment upon which must depend as a proof of facts. The writer never can admit that, in pleading the cause of his deeply-injured country, he is not to give effect to his argument, by naming a person whose general counsels have been pernicious, merely because that person happens to lie under accusation for specific acts, for which he is to be tried. But on the present occasion, the friends of Lord M. have furnished a strong reason why the writer should not shun the mention of his name. Mr. *Pitt*, and many others, even *hundreds in the house of Commons* have acted, as if under a conviction that Lord M. has not committed any crime, and at most only a trivial inadvertency; and there has appeared amongst them no small desire to see him again *restored to power*. This being the case, there can be no objection to our making a due estimate of his former counsels, and shewing what have been the fatal consequences.

Let those then who, with Lords *Liverpool* and *Melville*, shared in the pernicious counsels, or abetted the measures, which dissolved our once glorious and happy, but delicate union with *America*, now make to their country the best atonement in their power, by a future adherence in *England*, to that great, prominent, sacred principle of the constitution, which then they attempted to violate in *America*; that, whereby *taxation and representation* are inseparably united? To the writer of these pages it is now a source of satisfaction, which neither court honours nor official wealth could bestow, that, more than thirty-one years ago, and anterior to the *American* war, he recommended through the medium of the press, a legislative declaration of *American independance on parliament*, and a voluntary federal union between that country and *England*, un-

der the crown which then was common to both; on a simple plan, amply providing against the present ill consequences to this country, from the fatal separation. Had that temperate and reasonable counsel been then attended to, the SHIPPING, the SEAMEN, the strength, and prosperity of *America*, would at this time have been in effect the shipping, the seamen, the strength and prosperity of *England*; and such policy naturally producing a train of events, very different from what we have since experienced, it is not probable that, had we so avoided the *American* war, and so improved our *American* connection, we should now have seen the shipping, the seamen, the strength of *Holland*, *Belgium*, *Spain*, *Genoa*, and all *Italy*, augmenting the power of *France*; nor would there have been in any *Englishman's* mind, place for the anxiety which must now be felt by every friend of his country on viewing the state of the nation, as exposed to the attempts of its enemies, even upon its own shores: but on the contrary, the observation made to the author by one of the unwilling founders of the *American* republic, would have been verified; that the united countries would thereby have been placed, with the irresistible means of commanding peace, at the head of the civilized world. Comparing a situation so enviable and so glorious, in which we might by ordinary prudence have soon been in the same situation in respect of taxation, as that which Mr. *Jefferson* lately announced to the people of *America*, with the perilous situation in which the nation now stands, staggering under a debt of between six and seven hundred millions, we may learn the high importance of constitutional principles, and of strict political integrity; and the low estimation in which self-important speech-making, and intriguing statesmen, who are corruptly subservient to a faction behind the throne, calling themselves the King's friends, or treacherously subservient to kings themselves, ought to be held; for by this retrospect we shall have reason to conclude, that, by the adoption, or by the rejection, of a single political principle as a rule of government, it shall depend whether a people are to become the greatest, or the

most insignificant of nations, the envy or the scorn of mankind.

It is with a melancholy remembrance of the influence of the human passions, to obscure the plainest truths in the science of civil government, that even amongst the parliamentary opposers of the *American* war, the writer does not recollect any but the Earl of *Abingdon*, and Mr. *David Hartley*, and latterly the Duke of *Richmond*, who opposed that war as *radically unjust in principle*, and as striking at the root of our own constitution; nor any one of them except Mr. *Hartley*, who made known to him his approbation of the plan of free union, above-mentioned; although the author had industriously used means of making it known to the members of both houses of parliament. As for that king of sophistry, that eternal dealer in the contradictions which necessarily flow from attempting to combine inveterate theoretic despotism, with chimerical notions of practical good government, who "had his full share in the counsels of 1766," it was his pride and his boast, that throughout the dispute with *America*, he, more than any other individual member of the house of commons, was the champion of that *right*,¹ the assertion of which, was the fatal cause of so much mischief. Accursed be such pretences to political wisdom! But whatever *Englishmen* in particular may have suffered from those subtleties, which not only then corrupted the whig creed, but which afterwards also caused a great apostacy; or, whatever *Europeans* in general may have suffered from eloquent sophistries in recommendation of despotic power, mankind at large have had ample consolation in the circumstance, that the same age which produced a learned, a metaphysical, and a mysterious *Burke*, also produced a *Washington*, an *Adams*, and a *Jefferson*, honest politicians, exercising sound understandings, in the cause of human liberty.

1 The reference to his words is mislaid.

LETTER V.

MY LORD,

BEFORE we pass from the *American* war to the war of 1793, that is, from Lord *North's* war, to Mr. *Pitt's* war, we must pay due attention to the most important question that in any period of *English* history ever agitated our nation; namely, that which respects a reform in our parliamentary representation, and the duration of parliaments: I say the *most* important question, and I say it with confidence; because that which is *political liberty itself*, must hold precedence of that which is only an aid or a security to liberty, whatever may be its dignity or its magnitude: this question therefore exceeds in importance any thing that was settled either by *Magna charta* or the *Bill of Rights*; both of which, inasmuch as they secured *not* such a representation of the people in Parliament, nor such a short duration of parliaments, as both the *English* constitution and the rights of nature require, much as they did in *aid* of our liberties, were yet to our cost lamentably defective.

At various periods, attempts were made to restore annual elections, particularly in 1744, and 1745; and according to my recollection, the late Mr. *Sawbridge* also annually, for several years made a motion to that effect; and in the year 1776, Mr. *Witkes* moved, and made a good speech, for a more equal representation: but, the writer of this letter was himself, so far as he knows, the first who introduced the actual discussion of the question now under consideration, through the medium of the press;¹ to which he was much stimulated, by reading *Burgh's* Political Disquisitions.

¹ His friend Mr. *Granville Sharp* published in 1774, in vindication of the liberties of the people of *Ireland*, as not bound by *British* statutes, "A Declaration of the People's Natural Right to a share in the Legislature;" in which the general principles applying to all just legislation are laid down.

His attention was first drawn to the subject, by his having (then a sea officer in retirement) entered into the *American* controversy; by which he was led to notice the extreme ignorance and disregard of the constitution, then observable in the legislature; and, examining these phenomena, he soon perceived the cause. In the spring 1775, on republishing collectively a series of Letters for preserving to us *America*, he slightly touched on the subject of parliamentary reform; expressing a hope that Lord *Camden*, acting upon his own "wish" that the maxim of *Machiavel* should be followed, "of examining a constitution at certain periods, according to its first principles, in order to correct abuses, and supply defects," would take up the question, and "frame a proper bill on the occasion."¹ But as this was not done by that nobleman, and as the subject was near his heart, he himself afterwards entered regularly upon the discussion, and early in 1776, published his original treatise, and to the best of his power pressed the question upon the attention of persons in both houses of Parliament; as well as upon that of such private persons, as, in his retired situation, he was acquainted with. In 1777, he published his second treatise on reform; and in 1779, he in conjunction with the late Dr. *John Jebb*, and the present Mr. *Capel Lofft*, laid the first stone in founding the Society for *Constitutional* Information. Many distinguished persons both in and out of parliament became members, the immortal Sir *William Jones* accepted our election "with pleasure and gratitude,"² and the Society, according to the object of its institution, widely disseminated the principles of parliamentary reformation.

In 1780, the writer published his third treatise on the subject, and in the same year a noble member of the society, the Duke of *Richmond*, offered to the House of Lords, in an able and impressive speech, a Bill of Reform, on the principles laid down in the treatises above mentioned. The subject now engrossed much of the public attention; and the more it became understood, the greater was the interest it excited. Your Grace will recollect the quintuple alliance of *London*,

1 Amer. Independ. &c. p. 29. 2 Memoirs.

Westminster, Southwark, Middlesex, and Surry; and the other associations of towns, cities, and counties all over the kingdom; particularly that which so distinguished, for its public spirit the county of *York*, where the first meeting for restoring independence to parliament, was called by a requisition to the Sheriff, with *two hundred and nine* respectable signatures. It was held on the 30th. December, 1779, and appointed a Committee of *sixty one*. "to carry on the necessary correspondence for effectually promoting the object of their petition, and to prepare a plan of an association on legal and constitutional grounds to support that laudable reform, and such other measures as may conduce to restore the freedom of parliament."¹ The solemn proceedings likewise of all the associating bodies, by their deputies, who in the years 1780, and 1781, met in the metropolis, and placed in their Chair, that venerable and steadfast patriot, Mr. *Wyvill*, will not be forgotten. The Association of the Volunteers of *Ireland*, the grand National Convention, of that country, and the proceedings of their delegates in the same cause, are great and honourable features in the history of those times. The proceedings of the Associated Bodies both in *England* and *Ireland*, and of delegates, Mr. *Wyvill* has taken care for the most part to record in his invaluable collection of "*Political Papers*," which already amount to five bulky volumes; nor has the present writer ever since the first moving of the question, except while, in deference to Mr. *Pitt*, he waited for the fulfilment of that gentleman's engagements, been very negligent, as may be seen by the subjoined list of his publications,² among which No. 13 is

1. *Wyvill's Polit. Papers*, I. 4.
2. No. 1. *Take your Choice*. 1776.
3. *The Legislative Rights of the Commonalty Vindicated*, 1777.
3. *Declaration of those Rights of the Commonalty of Great Britain*, without which they cannot be free, 1799.
4. *Declaration of Rights*, without which no Englishman can be a free man, nor the English Nation a free People, 1780.
5. *An Address to the Committees of the Associated Counties, &c.* 1780.
6. *The People's Barrier against undue Influence and Corruption*, 1780.

partly on another subject, and No. 19, 21, and 25, embrace also a reform in the *military branch of the constitution*, no less essential to liberty and good government, than even a reform in our representation; for they who can monopolize the sword are masters of all mens lives, liberties, and properties.

Although it be true that a cause which rests on the eternal principles of truth and justice; on principles without which liberty cannot exist, and without which likewise property must be a word without a meaning, and the *English* constitution also a dream; a cause which every human breast, not bribed against the common rights and interest, or not blinded by prejudices equivalent to insanity, must feel to be its own; al-

7. Letter to the Freeholders of Middlesex, and Electors of London and Westminster, 1780.
8. Letters to the Deputies of the Associated and Petitioning Counties, Cities and Towns, 1781.
9. Ditto—To which is annexed, the Right and Duty, as well as Wisdom and Necessity of being Armed, for defence of the Peace, and Laws, and Liberties of our Country, 1782.
10. Give us our Rights! 1782.
11. Dialogue between a Clergyman and a Cottager, 1783.
12. Address to the Merchants, Manufacturers, &c. of Leeds, Wakefield, &c. 1783 or 1784.
13. Internal Evidence.—In answer to Soame Jenyns, Esq. 1784.
14. Letter to the Duke of Newcastle, 1792.1
15. Letter to a Friend at Boston, on associating in support of the Constitution, 1793.
16. The Commonwealth in Danger, 1795.
17. Letter to the High Sheriff of Lincolnshire, 1795.
18. Petition to the House of Commons, against the Pitt and Grenville Bills, 1796.
19. Appendix to the Letter to the High Sheriff of Lincolnshire, 1795.
20. Constitutional Defence of England, Internal and External, 1796.
21. An Appeal on the subject of the English Constitution, 1797.
22. An Appeal, civil and military, on the subject of the English Constitution, 1799.
23. Letter to the Rev. Chr. Wyvill, 1801.
24. Letter to the Electors of Nottingham, 1803.
25. A Review of the Proceedings upon the Petitions, complaining of an undue election and return for the town of Nottingham, 1803.
26. England's Egis, 1804.
27. Declaration of the Middlesex Freeholder's Club: and a Speech, 1804.

1 The principal matter of this letter is on another subject, but that of Reform makes part of it.

though such a cause stands not in need of the authority of names to recommend it to approbation, yet as there is a natural curiosity in wishing to know what eminent men have in any degree contributed to the advancement of truth, and the promoting of human freedom, I shall present my readers with a list of those, in whose works, or in whose occasional letters, according to materials in my hands, or my recollection, may be found direct testimonies of a wish, either for a more equal representation of the people in parliament, or for a much shorter legal duration of parliaments than at present; for which list see the Appendix.

In this list we cannot expect to find many early complainants against the *inequality* of representation; for while other dangers to liberty engaged mens' attention, and excited their efforts, it was not suspected that in this defect lay the seeds of a complete subversion of the constitution; but I confess it appears to me very wonderful, that so little attention had in times past been paid to the circumstance of *duration*; because from parliaments of a duration beyond a single session, the greatest evils had befallen both the nation, and its kings; and whether a longer duration had been *against law*, as by the proceedings of *Richard* the second, *Henry* the eighth, and *Charles* the second; or *by law*, as when the mistaken patriots in the reign of *Charles* the first, obtained an act to secure them from a dissolution without the consent of both houses,¹ the mischief had been equally certain, and deplorable.

It is not intended to insert in the list, parliamentary speakers in general, who in debate have shewn themselves favourable to reform, because their names are either familiar to the reader, or their sentiments accessible to him at pleasure; but two in particular are inserted, because of having spoken on *both* sides; namely, Lord *Melville*, who, although these questions are of the very essence of the constitution on points *at all times equally sacred*, was against reform, and for it, and against it again, according to the ministerial order of the day;² and Mr. *Pitt*, once the very champion,

1 16 Charles I. c. 7. 2 "The Right Hon. *Henry Dundas*, "thought it his *duty* to state some of those reasons to the house "which induced him to declare himself a *sincere friend* to this "question. [A very hearty laugh.] Debate on Reform, 18 Ap. 1785. See *Wyllie's* Polit. Papers II. 340.

and afterwards the assassin of reform. And I name these men, in hopes the reader will refer to their speeches; in order that they may see how unanswerably men of abilities speak when on the side of truth and liberty; and how much like drivellers when against them. For the same reason I may refer to the writings of *Jenyns*,¹ *Paley*,² and *Burke*,³ all men of distinguished talents; when it will be seen that wit, reason, and eloquence, in a bad cause, only disgrace those who use them. Besides these, I do not recollect any writers of eminence, who have taken the field as adversaries of parliamentary reformation; for those, who have written with most plausibility, have for the most part had the sense to conceal their names. There is, indeed, a great body of anonymous writing, and some of it meriting great attention, on the side of reform.

By carefully looking over all the *Wyvill* Political Papers, many names might be added to the list in the Appendix, of persons whose sentiments are deserving of high respect; as there will also be found such writing as never yet did, and never can, fail finally to give triumph to the cause in which it is employed. Had this writing been employed indeed on abstruse points of faith, concerning the affairs of another world, learning and ability might have been displayed perhaps on both sides, with equal reputation to the disputants; but in the case before us, there is neither reputation to be got for valuable writing, nor credit for integrity, except on one side; for those whose arguments go to prove the *English* constitution a fraudulent bubble, and that mankind have no political rights; how much sooner they may for a moment be applauded by the courtly and the corrupt, will be sure to fall ere long into contempt and reprobation. It has not, my Lord, been fine writing, argument, and oratory, by which we have hitherto been "baffled;" but by apostacy, treachery, chicane, and *profligate voting*; such exactly as we have recently witnessed, in the disgraceful proceedings for screening from justice; a minister, who, by an infamous breach

¹ Answered by *Internal Evidence*, in 1784. ² Answered by *Letters to W. Paley, M. A. &c. by T. Holt White, Esq.* in 1796. Published by Johnson. ³ Of this gentleman's reasoning on the subject, specimens will appear in this work.

of trust, and in gross violation of law, had been privy to, and connived at, the misapplication of public money, for the purpose of private emolument.

On reviewing the past controversy on the subject of parliamentary representation, and what has hitherto been the *result*, we shall be obliged to admit, that the reasoning of the *faction behind the throne*, on which they relied for overturning, as I have said, whatever stood in the way of their designs, was not built on slight foundations: nor shall we be surprised that such a faction, when the pillage of *America* had escaped them, fastened with the keener rapacity on *England* and *Indostan*. But amongst our authorities in favour of the necessity of a parliamentary reformation, let us not forget the words of the great *Chatham*, who wished "to infuse a portion of new health into the constitution, to enable it to bear its infirmities;"¹ nor those of his son, in his speech on the 18th of May, 1782, when he said, "That person was not apt to indulge vague and chimerical speculations, inconsistent with practice and expediency. I personally know, that it was the opinion of this person, that without recurring to *first principles* in this respect, and establishing a more solid and equal representation of the people, by which the proper constitutional connection should be revived, this nation, with the best capacities for grandeur and happiness of any on the face of the earth, must be confounded with the mass of those whose liberties were lost in the corruption of the people."

1 Quoted by *Junius*, in his letter to *Wilkes*.

LETTER VI.

MY LORD,

NOW the man who, twenty three years ago, said all this, treacherously building on such a father's fame, and laying in a rich stock of personal popularity by thus

standing forward as the champion of our liberties, had early secured to himself the voice of the nation; but as he well knew that to be the most objectionable of all claims to the confidence of the *faction behind the throne* and the *King's friends*, and the last of all pretensions likely to secure him the reins of government, he must have possessed some other secret, whereby he rose to the summit of power, and there so long bore irresistible sway. What that secret was, no man will expect to have proclaimed, nor otherwise to discover its nature, than by a consideration of the relationship between *cause* and *effect*. He who shall duly reflect on those *principles of government which sprung up near the throne* at the time I have mentioned, and on their having to this day lost nothing of their influence, will not find it easy to believe that the *faction behind the throne*, or any of those who called themselves the *King's friends*, could have advised a surrender at discretion of the reins of government, together with the *key of the treasury*, and the *patronage of the crown*, into the hands of the *child and champion of Parliamentary Reformation*, possessing the favour of the people, and powers of eloquence to have made the Borough mongers crouch at his feet, and submissively surrender up their usurpations. And if this cannot be believed, what follows but a conviction, that there was a right understanding between the contracting powers, a regular treaty of cession, and an alliance offensive and defensive; which from thence forward was completely to identify him with them, and to bind them to one common interest, and one common line of action.

Be this, however as it may, the writer was early informed and on high authority, that on Mr. Pitt's stating how he was circumstanced in respect to his own conduct, and how he stood pledged to the people, for a reformation of parliament, he was graciously answered that *that matter was left in his hands, to be disposed of as he should think fit*. Thus forms at least were preserved, no obstacles arose, the treaty was soon brought to a conclusion, the treasury with its boroughs and all its other dependencies were regularly ceded, and possession was taken. Now, my Lord, as effects must have

correspondent causes, if we turn our eyes to the persecutions, or rather persecutions of unparalleled severity, of those virtuous reformers *Muir*,¹ *Palmer*, *Winterbottom*, and others, and to the other ten thousand events which must crowd upon our recollection, as marking the character of of Mr. Pitt, from the time he thought popularity no longer useful to him, it will be extremely difficult for us to doubt, as to the nature of the conditions which made the secret articles of the treaty between the *faction behind the throne*, and that minister. Can we indeed avoid suspecting that through a vulgar lust of mere delegated power, to be held on such degrading conditions, and for such pernicious purposes, as to exclude all the grand and virtuous parts of ambition, he had sold himself to the *faction behind the throne* and their allies the *faction of the Boroughs*.

Have we any other possible key to the idolatry that has ever been paid him by all the harpies of plunder and the children of corruption? to his immense majorities while in the career of oppression? to his daring to dispose of millions without the knowledge of parliament? to his declaring that THE CROWN HAD A RIGHT TO LAND IN ENGLAND FOREIGN MERCENARY ARMIES AT HIS DISCRETION? to his influence where personally feared and hated? to his facility of abdication and resumption of power? to his borough-monger peerages? to his contempt for all acts of parliament for specifically appropriating the money granted for the various public services? to his rancour as an apostate? to his state prosecutions in 1794? to his *green bags* full of *universal suffrage*, and his secret committees of borough proprietors and patrons, their deputies and allies for defending the rotten-borough system, and a long et cetera? and again, to a *Rotten Borough war* which, for its political wickedness and state madness, can no otherwise be accounted for? and finally to his heading in the face of his disgusted country, the com-

¹ Mr. *Muir*, in comparison of whom, as a political and constitutional character, his persecutors were fiends of darkness, although a gentleman bred to the bar, was prior to transportation to *Botany Bay*, confined amongst the lowest and most profligate felons, in one of the *Ballast Halks on the Thames*!!!

² See reasons for so calling it in *The Constitutional Defence of England, internal and external*. p. 99.

bined factions, in their attempts at screening *corruption* and *infamy*?

But because this minister only bribes others with public money, in the shape of official salaries, and has not been known personally to rob the treasury to fill his own pockets, we are told he is not *personally* corrupt!!! because while hundreds of government bills are dishonoured for want of cash to pay them, he only "*accommodates*" change-alley members of parliament, with a secret loan of *forty thousand pounds* of public money without interest, he is not *personally* corrupt!!! because he himself has been biassed, not with money, but with power, he is not *personally* corrupt!!! although he is the manager and upholder of a system, by which the nation is robbed of its representation, a robbery, which provides the means whereby it may be robbed of its property to any extent, he is not *personally* corrupt!!! and notwithstanding he, in that parliamentary court, wherein the cases of liberty and property are chiefly decided, is the regular packer of juries for the crown against the people, by putting upon the jury an immense number of the crown's servants, and keeping in constant pay a very large proportion of the jury, he forsooth is not *personally* corrupt!!!¹ He, in short, who as a minister lives, and moves, and has his very being, in a system which for its *corruption*, may set at defiance the whole world for such another example, is not, we are told, *personally* corrupt!!!

"It is," says Mr. *Burke*, "by bribing, not so often " by being bribed, that wicked politicians bring ruin " on mankind. Avarice is a rival to the pursuits of " many. It finds a multitude of checks, and many " opposers, in every walk of life. But the objects of " *ambition* are for *the few*; and every person who aims " at indirect profit, and therefore wants other protection than innocence and law, instead of its rival, becomes its instrument. There is a natural allegiance " and fealty due to *this domineering paramount evil*, " from all the vassal vices, which acknowledge its superiority, and readily militate under its banners; and

¹ See a future page, in which will be shewn the mode of packing parliamentary juries.

" it is under that discipline alone, that avarice is able
 " to spread to any considerable extent, or to render
 " itself a general public mischief. It is therefore no
 " apology for ministers, that *they* have not been
 " bought, &c."¹

It is, methinks, a curious coincidence, that this admirable piece of eloquence, in the course of a bitter invective, was actually applied to Mr. *Pitt*, at that early period of his administration; and that about ten years afterwards this minister should give the orator, for acceptable services, and the orator should accept from this minister, *pensions* which he sold for *thirty-seven thousand pounds*, in ready money. With regard to Mr. *Pitt's* loan of *forty thousand pounds* to *two members of parliament* without interest, and at the very period when government bills were daily dishonoured for want of money from the treasury to pay them,² and under other very suspicious circumstances (on which perhaps I may touch again) I imagine that any impartial man who shall take the trouble to examine and to weigh THE EVIDENCE, and who shall be capable of drawing thence a rational conclusion, will find it extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to divest the case of very high state criminality, accompanied by the aggravations of gross falsehood, respecting the "solidity of the public resources."

Why it was not so considered by that grand inquest, or jury, to whom it belongs to impeach, or why a select committee of that inquest, consisting in part of Lord *Castlereagh*, and *several other servants in the pay of the crown*, seemed more intent on framing an apology for, than on fixing criminality upon the minister, the reader will decide for himself. But it is not necessary for me here to argue the case, as it has been ably done in the weekly *Political Registers* for June 15th. and 22d.

But I must not part with one passage in the last

¹ Speech, Feb. 28, 1785.

² The loan was in the latter end of 1796, and between June 1796, and June 1798, at the victualling office alone, *seven hundred and forty two accepted bills were dishonoured*; which is more than *two a day* for two whole years, Sundays not excepted.

mentioned of those weekly papers, without an observation. "It was a saying," observes the writer "of Lord Northington; that a man had *better be damned than indemnified*, and as his Lordship, doubtless meant *politically*, there can, I think, be little objection to the sentiment. Nevertheless, I am far from thinking that enough has been done in this case." In thus thinking, this writer and myself perfectly agree. I presume also that we likewise agree in this, that between *indemnifying and impeaching Mr. Pitt*, the house of Commons had no possible medium.

That the resolution of the house which was the ground of the impeachment of Lord *Melville*, as literally applies to Mr. *Pitt* as to his Lordship, must be evident on a mere inspection :

“ Resolved,—That { Lord Melville } having been *privy*
 { Mr. Pitt }

" to, and *connived at*, the withdrawing from the Bank
" of *England* for purposes, as

"acknowledged by { Lord Melville } of private
 { Mr. Pitt }

" interest or emo- { Mr. Trotter,
" lument, to { Boyd, Ben- sums issued
{ field, and Co. }

“ { to him as Treasurer of the Navy,
“ { by him as First Lord of the Treasury } and placed

“ { to his } account at the
“ { to the Treasurer of the Navy's } Bank,

“ according to the provisions of the 25. Geo. III. c. 31.
“ *has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a*
“ *high breach of duty.*”

Now we have only to consider whether the plea of *state necessity*, set up by Mr. Pitt, for *bribing*—I beg pardon—for “accommodating” *two members of parliament* with the use of Navy money without interest, while that money was so much wanted in the navy department; and the plea also of MERIT for thereby *saving the nation from great mischief*, ought to have made so great a distinction as it did, between the case of Lord

Melville, who "accommodated" *Mr. Trotter*, his private agent, and was IMPEACHED; and the case of *Mr. Pitt*, who "accommodated" *two members of parliament*, and was INDEMNIFIED. The case, by what lies upon the very surface, speaks for itself: but the EVIDENCE, as brought in the Weekly Political Registers above mentioned to bear upon the point, and to throw upon the transaction a clear light, will cause the warmest partizan of the minister to blush for a defence, which would have disgraced the lips of any but an Old Bailey Solicitor. And when such a minister who, as the partizans of Lord Sidmouth tell us, drove his Lordship out of the cabinet by "the measures he pursued to rescue Lord Melville from the laws of his country, and by his profi-
"gate waste of the public resources in the *Atholl* case,"¹ ventures, under the protection of such an indemnity, to brave the storm of public indignation; and when his continuance in office must be a national disgrace, attended with no other prospect than that of new evils and new dangers to the state, pertinaciously clings to power to the last convulsive grasp, to what can it be attributed, but to a personal desperation, accompanied by a total disregard of consequences to the public!

In our courts of law, my Lord, we have such things as verdicts being set aside for having been *contrary to evidence*: and in a higher court also, we have precedents, which should make wicked ministers, although intrenched chin-deep with indemnities, tremble for their iniquities. Lord Coke in his 4th. Inst. c. 1. informs us of the fate of *Empton* and *Dudley*, although their oppressions had had the sanction of *acts of parliament*. And by the 1 Hen. IV. c. 3. in our statute books, we have "a repeal of the whole parliament," holden anno. 21. Rich. 2. and the authority given
"heroby."

This bold man intends, it is said, to dissolve the parliament. Such a measure must put us in mind of the conduct of the king we have just mentioned; who, says *Rapin*, "had already taken all necessary measures to

¹ Times, 12th. July, 1806.

“ have a parliament at his own devotion. Some time since, he had changed all the Sheriffs¹ of the kingdom and suffered none, but what had promised to be subservient to his designs. He had taken the same precautions, with respect to all officers that had credit and power in the boroughs and counties. So by means of the magistrates, and persons in public posts, *he had caused such representatives to be chosen as he had secured before hand.* If any were elected not agreeable to him, *the Sheriffs were ordered not to return them,* but to cause others to be chosen in their room.” * * * But this “ was one of the principal causes of *Richard’s* destruction, as will be seen hereafter. And indeed it is impossible, that a nation can see their liberties in the hands of men, whom *they have not themselves freely chosen,* without desiring to be delivered from *such an oppression.*”²

“ *All the acts,*” of the late parliament, “ were so manifestly destructive of the nations’ liberties, that *they were unanimously repealed.*”³

“ After the rights and privileges of the people were by these acts restored to the same state as before the incroachments of *Richard,* the authors and advisers of the usurpations, were called to an account.”⁴

Perhaps this trier of a people’s patience may find the nation is not now in a temper to witness a dissolution, for no other purpose than that he may oust from the *Treasury Boroughs* the creatures of Lord *Sidmouth* and put in *his own* ; as well as play off some other boroughmanœuvres, for counteracting the defections which have of late broken in upon the unanimity of the Borough Faction ! Perhaps he will find that the nation is “ determined no longer to *see their liberties in the hands of men whom they have not themselves freely chosen ;*” and that it will not cease its exertions, until “ *delivered from such an oppression !*”

When we have heard it declared in the court of King’s Bench on a trial which took place in 1792, that

1 It was but in the preceding reign, that the election of the Sheriffs was taken from the people ; See Blacks. Com. iv. 427.

2 I. 468.

3 I. 485.

4 I. 486.

at the election for *Westminster* in 1788, (Mr. *Pitt* then holding his present employments) that a large sum of money was paid for supporting the court candidate, and that, "as it was furnished by the SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, he best could tell whence it came,"¹ and the speaker offering a proof of the fact; when we have heard it, in the house of Commons, directly imputed to Lord *Castlereagh*, that he employed the public money to purchase votes for carrying the Union in 1800 (Mr. *Pitt* then also holding his present employments, and his Lordship holding his tongue under the imputation :) when we have heard the declaration of Admiral *Markham*, that, out of the fifteen millions a year voted for the navy, one third of it is swallowed up in abuse and corruption of one kind or another, and know it to be a very prevalent opinion, that out of the *Navy Extraordinaries*, (that service on account of its popularity being most liberally supplied) it is the custom to purchase men of war, for the minister's parliamentary line of battle; and when by the system of *bribing*, we see *openly* practised upon parliament by places and emoluments, we are but too well warranted in believing, (what no human being I believe doubts) that bribery both in elections and in parliament is likewise practised in private; when, I say, we have heard, and seen, and believe most of these things, and have strong reason to suspect the rest, the nation will not imagine that Mr. *Pitt*, circumstanced as he now is, will solely depend upon his *popularity* for securing a new parliament to his mind; and how it will like to pay for a parliament suited to Mr. *Pitt's* necessities, necessities which cannot fail to make the terms of the contractors run high, remains to be seen.

Having thus noticed the introduction and early discussion of the question of *Parliamentary Reformation*, and indulged in such cursory remarks as arose out of that topic, let us now return to the point we were upon.

• See a subsequent page.

LETTER VII.

MY LORD,

FROM what has already been said, and from the statement of a few facts, and the use of a very few arguments, the true cause of the war of 1793, will be clearly seen. When the auspicious beginnings of the *French* revolution had re-awakened in *England* that spirit of reformation in what related to the essentials of our liberty, which Mr. Pitt's duplicity, procrastination, and art, had caused for a while to slumber; and he apprehended the day was approaching when his sincerity was to be put to the test, under circumstances not perhaps allowing him, by his private treachery, any longer to defeat his own public measures, he doubtless watched with deep anxiety what was passing in *France*. Had he been sincere in the cause he pretended to have at heart, and to patronise, he, like all other friends to liberty and virtue in this country, would have hailed with a friendly voice, the dawn of continental freedom and happiness; he, like them, would have thought it the time for renewing his own efforts; and it might naturally have been expected of him, to have then represented to that person, who *had left in his hands the matter of parliamentary reformation to be disposed of as he should think fit*, that then was the time for using all the influence of both their stations for rendering the Commons House of Parliament what the constitution requires it should be; so that our government might be quietly settled on its own proper foundations, before any characteristic fooleries of the *French* people, or any licentious insubordination springing from the intoxication of a nation of slaves suddenly made free, should cause the current of free opinions in this country to take any unexpected direction; or the *English* nation should be driven into a state of just discontent and well founded anger, on beholding the grand efforts

then making for public liberty in *France*, while an intolerable wrong striking at the root of their own freedom met with no redress, although he who had undertaken to be their advocate and champion, was then a minister more omnipotent than *England* had ever before experienced.

Feeling myself at that period, the powerful claims of the people upon Mr. *Pitt*, and the peculiar fitness of the time, I sought to know what was intended to be done; and applying to one, high in rank and office, who either was, or thought himself in the minister's entire confidence respecting the whole business of reform, this was the answer I received: "*We are waiting to see what will be done by the patriots of France.*" Why Mr. *Pitt* for reforming the *English* government, should then wait upon *French* movements, I could not comprehend; but I have since learned to understand his meaning and his motives. Had he wished to reform at home, that wish would have beamed on his countenance, and the minister's sympathy would have heightened the glow felt in every patriot breast. But no: silent as the grave, and cold as death, safe locked in his iron bosom lay the dark purpose of his soul. His secret meditations were not on reform, but on war: not how to restore, but how to trample on the liberties of his country. After what has already been said, can it be asked if there be grounds for this conclusion? The best. Were your nurseryman to send you a plant for a nonpareil, which afterwards produced crabs, would you believe the nurseryman or the fruit? Do you inquire *why* such should be his horrid choice? *why* a preference so monstrous, so inexpressibly shocking, should be made? For an explanation you must apply to *the King's friends*, to *the faction behind the throne*, and to their faithful allies, *the faction of the boroughs*. They if they please can explain this mystery. Meanwhile you may do well to search the human heart, to discover whether there be in reality depraved natures, in whose estimation it is "better to rule in hell, than serve "in heaven!"

But, my Lord, a tyrant is not so rare a character, nor hypocrisy so rare a vice, that we should be sur-

prized to discover either one or the other where they were not expected to be found : nor is it other than our every day's experience, and conformable to the testimony of all history, that rather than render to a people any right, or perform towards them any justice, which can be either with-held or denied, the ordinary resort of the usurper, the ambitious demagogue, or the corrupt politician, is WAR. And in this christian and polished age, we have too our sober, moral, apologizing writers, who gravely maintain that war is not in itself an evil, but the contrary ; not a disease, but a cure or preventive of diseases ; not a bloody issue requiring the physician to heal it, but a salutary evacuation without which the body politic must die of plethora ; and we have reviewers to praise, and statesmen to reward such writers. War in *prospect*, and war in *retrospect*, are to be sure two different things. Whatever be the real motives of its real authors, a war in *prospect* is invariably held forth as *necessary*, and therefore *just* ; and the advantages to be gained, and the glory to be acquired, are described in glowing colours. Such were the pretences and the pictures held up to us by Mr. *Pitt* at the commencement of the present war ; nay, the more easily to gull the nation, it was proposed as an *experiment* worth trying, which if not successful, might at pleasure be abandoned ; and with such abundant means in the hands of a minister of this country, for deceiving the people as to facts as well as principles, and for deluding them into a war, as already instanced in the case of that with *America*, nothing so easy, in a country circumstanced as this is, as to bring on a war. The glittering prospects presented by our talking, tricking minister, have proved mere air bubbles for trying the infantine credulity of the nation, while he was carrying on a system of fraud and tyranny.

But now the time is come for viewing twelve years of this war, (including a short truce) in *retrospect* ; and now we behold in all their magnitude its numerous evils ; now we see arising around us, the bloody visions of our countrymen and relatives whom it has slaughtered, and we feel the grievous burthens it has laid upon us ; now we discern its effect in changing *France* from a

feeble suppliant of *England* ~~for protection~~, to a terror of *Europe*, "perplexing monarchs with fear of change;" now we are brought in suffering and sorrow to contemplate the vices it has engendered, the miseries it has produced, and the mischiefs it has sown in our system of government; and now at length it is, that its powerful authors, and their hireling host of abettors, being sick with disappointment, and silent through shame, honest men are able to make known to their country, *the true character of its origin*. Having had enough of the *experiment*, we now find to our cost, that the rash and wicked authors of the calamity are utterly incapable either of conducting the contest with success, or of bringing it to a termination: at their hands we can neither have a war of energy, nor a peace of repose.

LETTER VIII.

MY LORD,

IN considering the present war—that is, taking it to have commenced in 1793, and to have been divided into a first and a second part, separated by a truce; we may discuss what belongs to it under three heads, namely, the circumstances which led to it; those attending its commencement; and those which followed; as all of them materially belong to our consideration of the *state of the nation*. First, then, I must ever hold it to have been in reality a war waged by the *court* and *borough factions* in alliance, for averting from them that *parliamentary reformation* which promised to rescue our country from their usurpations and pillage, and if possible for establishing for ever in themselves and families their detested power; and it was because the revival of liberty in *France*, had occasioned the revival of the spirit of reformation in *England*, that to crush that new liberty in its infancy, became so ardently their desire, as to blind them to the infamy of the thing itself, and the aggravated infamy of leaguering for so

shameful a purpose with every despotism in *Europe*; as well as to render them utterly regardless of every national consideration which would have forbidden wise statesmen or honest men from involving their country in such a contest. And thus only is it possible to explain the bitter and rancorous spirit they manifested against human liberty and human rights, and against all who had the courage to assert or maintain them by deed, word, or writing.

We must recollect, that so long as things went well, towards a restoration of their long lost liberties to the people of *France*, a general joy gladdened the hearts of the people of *England*, but the court and borough factions, and their minister, Mr. Pitt, REJOICED NOT. Their sympathy was not with the rising freedom, but with the falling despotism; and consequently, that which gave them most pain and alarm, was the revival at home of the spirit of *parliamentary reformation*; and the consequent danger to their oligarchical power. Fearful only of this reforming spirit, secret service money found its way into every popular society, secretaries and other corrupt members were taken into pay, well instructed spies were introduced, and all the movements of the societies were duly reported, and constantly watched with a jealous eye; while numerous writers under ministerial patronage, were regularly employed in disseminating sentiments adverse to all freedom in all countries; and others who had written under the influence of contrary sentiments, and had warmly sympathized in *French* patriotism, were corrupted and gained over, and thus made bitter enemies of that liberty, in whose service they had formerly exercised their pens, and raised themselves to public notice.

Even the public dinners held in *London*, of those who rejoiced in the fair prospects to liberty and humanity, filled the factions with painful sensations, and with wishes for an opportunity of letting loose the sword for curing these patriotic servours. On the near approach of one of these dinners, I well remember to have heard in a large company, (on a dining party at the house of the Rev. *Basil Berridge*, at *Algarkirk*,

in the county of *Lincoln*,) from a military officer, that all things would be in readiness, the guards were to be under orders, ball cartridges to be delivered out, and an example was to be made if,—On my saying I purposed being at that dinner, politeness prevented my hearing more: but for having attended that dinner, I received a strong mark of displeasure from a nobleman of the first rank, and a privy counsellor, holding two important offices, one extremely lucrative, and the other of high dignity and power. I was refused the *promised* Lieutenant-Colonelcy of my regiment, and superseded as major. The notification of that refusal having been in 1791, may be taken as a pretty decisive symptom of the disposition at that early period of our ministers, to whom this nobleman was sufficiently subservient; ¹ a period when the *French* revolution had produced nothing, but what was a subject of joy to all good men.

But by far the most important fact for shewing the minds of the *court and borough factions* prior to the war, was a profound secret until declared by Earl *Stanhope*, in the house of lords, in his celebrated speech on the 20th. of February, 1800. He charged his Majesty's ministers with *perverting* the meaning of the *French* decrees, and the letters of the *French* ministers, by *mistranslating* their language, and that in passages of the very first importance.—“If,” says he, “they
“ have done so wilfully, I know no guilt can equal
“ theirs; for, to set the people of two nations to cut
“ each others throats, by unjustly exasperating them
“ against each other, is the full measure of human delinquency.” The instance brought in proof, was in the mistranslation of a letter of the ambassador, *Chauvelin*, to Lord *Grenville*, dated 27th. Dec. 1792.

“ To shew that this system of misconception, or misrepresentation, has been *uniformly* acted upon, I need
“ only remind your lordships that *M. Talleyrand*, and
“ several other persons came over to *England*, in an
“ official capacity, before the war commenced between
“ *Austria and France*. There were then, however,

¹ See the Author's letter to the Duke of Newcastle, 1792.

“ some points in dispute between them, respecting the
 “ province of *Alsace*, which were likely to terminate
 “ in hostilities. I took occasion to represent to M.
 “ *Talleyrand*, the absurdity of two great nations going
 “ to war about objects so insignificant. The latter
 “ answered, that the *French* government were of the
 “ same opinion, and *would willingly submit their plea*
 “ to the judgment of the head of the only free nation in
 “ *Europe*, except *France*. He stated, and he stated
 “ with energy, that the *French* nation loved the people
 “ of *England*, because they are *free*; and, therefore,
 “ they wished that his Majesty, the king of *England*,
 “ or any commissioners by him appointed, should set-
 “ tle the question in dispute between *Austria* and
 “ *France*. He desired me to go to his Majesty’s mini-
 “ sters, to sound their dispositions, and to feel whether,
 “ by accepting the office of mediators, they would con-
 “ tribute to avert the calamities of war. I accepted
 “ the commission, and made the proposal to the secre-
 “ tary of state.”—Here Lord *Grenville* said, he did not
 “ recollect the circumstance.—“ You do not recollect it!
 “ —but I do. Think, my Lords, what a minister you
 “ have got, who thus forgets one of the most material
 “ and important facts, that has occurred during his
 “ whole administration. This handsome proposal, on
 “ the part of *France*, was not accepted. My reason
 “ for mentioning this fact is, to convince the house
 “ that the *French* were heartily disposed to shew the
 “ *British* government, and the *British* nation, every
 “ mark of possible respect. For what can be a greater
 “ degree of respect and confidence shewn either to a
 “ nation, a government, or an individual, than volun-
 “ tarily to propose to abide by their decision.”¹
 “ Now, my lords, I know it is unparliamentary to
 “ allude to discussions that have already taken place in
 “ this house, but I will suppose that somebody said in
 “ public, on the subject of *Buonaparte’s* late overtures
 “ for peace, that his answer² to the first letter of the

1 What a change has taken place, when *France* now lays it down
 as a principle, that an *English* minister in any court of *Germany*
 ought not to be tolerated!

2 Alluding to a letter of Lord *Grenville’s*.

“ *French Consul*, was justified by *Talleyrand's*. What would the house think of a minister, who should make such a declaration? But, my lords, the same system of misrepresentation has been pursued with respect to the language of that reply. *Talleyrand*, in his note, dated the 14th. of January last, says— ‘ assailed on all sides the republic could not but extend universally the efforts of her defence.’—This has not *the smallest resemblance* to the proposition (which was stated to be so infamous on the part of *France*,) that *France* claimed a right to attack *every* country, if she was attacked by *any other*. Here there is another instance of palpable misrepresentation; the tendency of which is, to excite hatred and animosity between two nations, which ought to live at peace with each other.”

LETTER IX.

MY LORD,

HERE, my Lord, there rushes on the mind matter to fill a volume: but I will keep my word: I will touch only on the heads of this matter: my readers will supply to themselves what I omit. That the mistranslations, and the perversions of the language of *France*, were intentional, there is too much ground for belief; because so to act, was in unison with the principles of men, designing the overthrow of our constitution, as well as with the temper they afterwards manifested in their intemperate pursuit of that object. In this part of the drama, a secretary of state is the immediate performer, but our business is not now with the subordinate characters in the piece, but with the principal; with him who was not only master-actor, but manager; nor indeed mere master-actor and manager only, but likewise, in the tragic department, a too frequent au-

thor, and the author of highest reputation. On Mr. Pitt then, as presiding minister, must rest the principal weight of responsibility.

On the mediation solicited by the *French* government, and on the rejection of that application, what are we to think? Let us, my Lord, look back to the then condition of *France*; and let us also re-call to our recollection, the then situation of *England*. *France*, at that time, after a short season of uncommon anxiety, and of agitation, bordering on general convulsion, had so far happily steered the course of regeneration, as to have succeeded in putting down, without bloodshed, the despotic part of her monarchy, and to have abolished a subservient and favoured aristocracy with which, on account of the immensity of its numbers and its wealth, it was impossible in the first instance to compromise, by conceding to it, as in *England*, an entire branch of the legislature. The people were free, and the king was upon his throne. But such a new-born freedom required to be fed with the milk of peace, and to be nursed until it could go alone by some guardian state of congenial mind, and of sufficient power. Whither then could *France* turn her eyes except to *England*?—Except to that country from which *Holland*, in a predicament still more critical found protection, and to which she was indebted for the uprearing and the consolidating of her republic?

On the first symptom of an hostility on the part of *Austria*, the true meaning of which could not be misunderstood by *France*, and the consequences of which to her infant freedom she then dreaded, and has since in fact experienced, hither we see came her ambassadors to implore protection. Conscious of her weakness, even that protection she dare not ask without first approaching in secret, without a numerous embassy of learned men, who might mix with the literati here, in order to multiply the hopes of finding a favourable passport to the foot of the throne. The leading ambassador was fortunate enough to find among our *English* philosophers, a nobleman, closely connected with two principal ministers, but a nobleman, whose more estimable distinctions are his simplicity of manners

and his probity, his devotion to liberty, his love of peace, his inventive genius, and his indefatigable labours in promoting the happiness of his country, and the good of mankind.

To him the *French* ambassadors, encouraged by the frank declaration of his own sentiments, first make known their diplomatic character and the object of their mission; in him they find the sincerest desire of laying the foundation of lasting peace and amity between the two nations; and by him the matter is immediately imparted to his relation, a secretary of state and cabinet counsellor, as the regular official channel of such a communication to the presiding minister, and to the cabinet.

Had ever *English* statesman such an opportunity of at once cultivating the blessings of peace, and of raising his country to pre-eminence and to glory? Had ever *English* statesman such means of acquiring over *France* an influence beneficial to *England*? or of converting the disposition to annoy his country which had distinguished the counsels of the *Bourbons*, while despotic, into an attachment natural in one nation towards another nation, having a similarity of interest in consequence of a similarity of government? Here we see *France*, simply in consequence of her having become free, naturally seeking alliance with freedom, as her proper security against the neighbouring despotisms, whose interest and strong desire it had now become, to destroy that form of government she had just adopted, and was endeavouring to establish. As far as it was possible to humble herself without surrendering her dignity, we see her giving the ascendant to her ancient rival; making her as it were the arbiter of her destiny; praying her mediation, and giving her *carte blanche* as to the terms.

It was at that moment the wisdom of *France*, to make all other considerations give way to the firm establishment and consolidation of her freedom; and she felt it. This, she must have seen in the light of a work of time; and consequently that a *durable* alliance with *England*, was her great external interest. Her leading patriots could not be so ignorant as not to

know, that a nation of slaves are of themselves, and without much aid, and much protection, and much time for learning all their new duties, and acquiring all the habits of their new regimen, extremely unfit, and nearly incapable of becoming a nation of free men.— Those patriots could not but know the immense difference there was in that respect, between the people of *France*, and the people of *America*. Besides, the revolution which had taken place in *France*, was in very important points quite dissimilar from that which had taken place in *America*; for in the former, the whole body of the law was totally changed; whereas in the latter, the great solid mass of their institutions, and the whole substance of their common law, remained untouched in essence; and little altered in form.

This was not only known to the men of letters in *France*, but to many among them who, by serving in *America*, had a perfect knowledge of facts. They also knew that at no time was *America* better governed, than when the power of *England* first expired, and when her several governments, as they had long subsisted, ceased to exist. There, from a knowledge of what belonged to freedom, and the *habit* of performing its duties, the *French* statesmen saw that mere temporary committees answered every purpose. They perceived that the people universally knew what was necessary to be done, and what was proper to be avoided; that they did the one, and shunned the other, just as naturally as the crowds in the streets of a great city flow at the same time in opposite, and in all directions, without confusion or any disposition to do each other mischief. These *Frenchmen* had seen that the *American* people had at the same time made war, and made civil constitutions without disorder or confusion, and without any superintending guardian having been in the smallest degree necessary; although they availed themselves of a treaty with *France* for military assistance.

It was otherwise in *France*, and her statesmen at this time felt the difference. The mass of the *French* nation having been in want of *knowledge*, and of *habits*, peace, and a powerful, protecting guardian were absolutely necessary to preserve their infant helpless free-

dom: and wanting these, their liberty has since been lost. But what has not *England* also lost, and what is now *the state of the nation*, in consequence of the conduct of Mr. Pitt, when *France* became our suitor, and in the natural humility of distress, implored our protection?

Politicians do not expect great benefits without paying for them; wherefore, had there been just cause of alarm to any foreign possession of *England* from *French* neighbourhood, every thing our minister could in reason have asked, would doubtless have been gladly conceded; friendly exchanges and other adjustments, beneficial to our dependencies, might have been settled; and if in order to have given weight to our mediation, we had been put to an expence in arming, liberal equivalents would have been offered; not but that a conduct of generosity and magnanimity, becoming a free nation, interposing on behalf of freedom, would have been the wisest policy. *Had at that time the English nation enjoyed a real representation in parliament, such would have been the conduct of her minister.*

On the obvious principle that the world is wide enough for the commerce and activity of both nations; and that it were better, if it were possible, to settle their respective pretensions amicably, and with moderation, than by arms and enmity; an opportunity so favourable for cultivating a friendship with *France*, for extinguishing jealousies, and for averting war, (if not forever, at least for an age;) would have been in the highest degree coveted by a real statesman of discernment and integrity. He would have gladly embraced the occasion of impressing on the gratitude of that nation and its government, a sense of important obligation. In accepting with one hand the office of mediator, with the other he would have tendered the cordial friendship of *England*. He would have mediated with a strict regard to justice, and with a frankness and dignity, leaving no doubt of a determination on his part, that his mediation should be respected. He would have revised and renewed the commercial treaty then in existence, and studiously have improved that species of intercourse on such a

system of mutual benefit, as in time to have become highly necessary to the comfort of both countries, and to such a degree interwoven with the interests and the habits of the people, as to have made it extremely difficult for statesmen less wise than himself, to have urged at any subsequent period two such nations to the cutting of each others throats. And Mr. Pitt does know, that a trade with an opulent and *near* neighbour, is the best of all trades.

A philosophic statesman would have foreseen to his country more peace and security from *France*, while a newly-limited prince and his people were balancing their powers, than from *France*, driven to the exercise of her military energies, under circumstances naturally producing military government; from *France*, occupied in the softening arts of commerce, and the peaceful tendencies of wealth, than from *France*, braced by war and poverty into national hardihood and a reliance on arms. A truly wise and provident minister would have seen the high degree of probability of greatly moderating at home the naval and military establishments, which are so burthensome to his country, by honourable and secure stipulations, in which there cannot possibly be a doubt but that *Spain* would have gladly joined. And seeing the solid advantages that would result to *England*, and the benefit to the whole civilized world, from a well adjusted alliance with *France*, on terms calculated for permanency and mutual honour, such, doubtless, would have been an object of Mr. Pitt's solicitude, had it not been for the motives arising out of the capitulation with *the faction behind the throne*, of which we have spoken.

Is it, my Lord, too much to believe that, by such a conduct towards *France* in her distress, and by the influence it would have given to the advice of such a friend, she might have been taught political moderation, and instructed in the best means of reconciling her liberty with the continuance of royalty; and the prudence even of restoring a limited nobility as the accompaniment of her limited throne, by selecting from the families of best pretensions for antiquity and public virtue, an hereditary nobility, for exercising the powers

of a distinct branch in her legislature? It was not an invincible objection to nobles merely as such, that made their exclusion from power an act of deliberate choice; but it was the fear inspired by the immense number of the noblesse, and their collective wealth, which on that occasion made their exclusion an act of necessity; for otherwise to have brought them under the restraints of a good government, would have been a less hazardous experiment than that which was made; besides which, it required but a slight knowledge of human nature, and of the *French* character, to have known that the new republicanism which then sprung up, was from seed sown in stony ground, suddenly shooting forth, but soon to wither and scorch away as the sun of a good constitution more suited to their habits and temper should shine forth.

LETTER X.

MY LORD,

THERE is likewise another and a grand reason why the *English* minister should have strained every nerve for a complete restoration of our constitutional liberties, and why he should have seized on so fortunate a moment for a strict alliance with *France*, on the basis of free governments. The union and co-operation of two such nations, on such a basis, must have had the happiest influence in awing the great potentates into a preservation of peace, towards meliorating the condition of mankind, north of the *Mediterranean*, and in the true sense of the phrase, effecting "the deliverance of *Europe*." The very example alone of two such potent and free governments in friendly alliance, and the happiness thence resulting to their people, would gradually

have put out of countenance all *European* despotism. Strangers of all nations would have returned home from such countries improved in political knowledge; and even sovereigns would have felt the obligation of preventing comparisons to their own disadvantage. In all other branches of science (those of civil government and divinity only excepted) we already see all nations vying with each other, and all governments affording mutual aid and encouragement, to studies and pursuits beneficial to mankind, even in time of war; of which we recently have had, in particular, noble examples, in what relates to voyages of discovery and to vaccination. If then, at the period we speak of, *England* had completely renovated her own constitution; if she had protected *France* in establishing her own freedom; and if those two had excited the admiration of all other *European* nations for the excellency of their governments, and for encouraging a study of the two sciences of all others the most important, the genial influence of their example must have been powerfully felt throughout *Europe*.

Civil government being the science first in rank amongst those which statesmen and sovereigns profess, the master-art which it is the occupation of their lives to learn and to practise, and to legislate and to rule for the good of mankind being their duty, and constituting their true glory and happiness; had the governments of two such nations as *England* and *France*, establishing complete political liberty, and consequently ceasing to discourage a free discussion of that science, its diffusion over the other *European* states must have gradually softened down to mildness and benignity, the stern visage of arbitrary power; and by degrees, perhaps imperceptible but yet certain, have meliorated the condition of mankind, and excited among their rulers a rivalry in legislation, and an emulation in beneficence; even beyond, it is to be hoped, what was so evidently excited among all sovereigns by the *Prussian Frederick*, in the science of war and the discipline of armies.

But let me return after this short digression, if it be a digression, to the option really presented to the presiding minister of *England*, when her mediation was

humbly sought by *France*, for preventing the bloody war we have witnessed; an option which placed in the hands of that minister, the fountains of good and evil to his country. Awful consideration! Surely no earthly minister had ever such an option before! Nor any statesman an equal opportunity of benefiting his country! Reflect, I beseech you, my Lord, on the nature of the case, on the extent of its consequences, and on the responsibility attending it. Contemplate, I entreat you, the contrast between what Mr. *Pitt* actually rejected, and what he actually chose; between the benefactor he might have been to his sovereign's wide dominions, to *Europe*, and to the civilized world, and the dreadful scourge to them he has proved; between the lustre he might have shed around our beloved *England*, and the melancholy gloom into which his pernicious counsels have plunged her; and mark in this comparison the true image of the soul of that man, who, instead of desiring to shine the benevolent guardian, feeling for mankind, the reforming patriot, the accomplished legislator, the advocate of rational discussion, the friend of freedom, and the exalter of the human character; made the shocking election of figuring as the firebrand of war, the stimulator of carnage, an opposite from patriot virtue, and a ferocious enemy to free writing, free speech, free action; a very goth, attempting by persecutions, chains, and dungeons, to establish a reign of terror, darkness and brutality; a poisoner of *English* society by a system of unexampled scoundrelism, and a debaser of the character of our nation! 'Tis not, thank God! *my* reproach, to have submitted unresistingly to the tyrant, or to have witnessed in silence my country's degradation!

I know not, my Lord, how it is, but in the mixed contemplation of that man's immeasurable depravity, and the wide range of its calamitous consequences, there is a something which for a time even suspends my indignation, and causes my resentments to die within me; for when I think upon the nations he has afflicted, and the diversity of evils he has brought upon my own particular country, commiseration for so much human

misery, and shame for so much dishonour, fill my whole mind, and absorb all its capacities of feeling.

On the circumstances which led to the present war, and on points arising therefrom, perhaps we have said enough : on those therefore attending its commencement we come now to speak.

LETTER XI.

MY LORD,

BY the *American* war *England* had increased her debt above *one hundred and twenty millions*; but in losing that federal union into which as I have said her old connection with *America* might have been improved, she had not only, as before noticed, received a deep *naval* wound—but she had likewise lost that decided peace-commanding ascendant among the nations which the exercise on her part of justice and wisdom would have conferred upon her. Instead therefore of again seeking war, she ought to have guarded with the utmost forethought and prudence against its renewal ; and taught by that recent stroke which had impaired the stamina of her real power and dominion, equally ought she to have strengthened and fortified herself, by removing every obstruction to the existence, and to the exercise of her own native energies, *civil* and *military*.

In place of the strength which in *America* had been lost, *England's* strength at home ought to have been improved. The representation of her people in parliament was gone to extreme decay ; and, as for her true, genuine, proper, constitutional militia, known in the antient books, by the title of *Posse Comitatus*, it might be said, notwithstanding an Essay upon it, from the pen of the immortal *Jones* published in 1780, to have

fallen into an almost complete oblivion with the public ; although that Essay ought to have been known, and I presume must have been known to Mr. Pitt ; who also, from his legal education, could not without shame have been ignorant of *the military branch of our constitution*.

But this minister, instead of adding to our strength, by restoring to its full vigour the *civil branch of our constitution*, was then treacherously adding to its decay, by elevating the principal borough holders to the peerage, and thus rendering the House of Commons more and more dependent upon the House of Lords, more and more a shadow and mockery of popular representation ; and instead of augmenting our military energies, by fully restoring *the military branch of the constitution*, he left that as he found it, treacherously sacrificed to court policy ; since which, as the urgent demands of war came upon him, he substituted for a revival in this respect of the constitution, his tricking dishonourable plans, which gave such just offence to our commanders of militia ; as well as his other unconstitutional novelty, for converting all the parish officers in the kingdom into serjeants and crimps for raising a mercenary army ; a project which has deservedly been the object of satire and ridicule.

But notwithstanding the treachery of the minister in going to war, without at the same time restoring the constitutional energies of our government, civil and military, yet, compared with all the nations under the old governments of *Europe*, *England* had at that period in her bosom so much of the spirit of liberty, as in comparison with them, gave her a far more energetic character ; and her commerce gave her a navy and wealth ; so that she was still too great and too formidable to be driven into a war against her will. What but a very short time antecedent to the war was her power compared with that of *France*, we have already seen, by the fearful, anxious, secret embassy from the *French* to the *English* court ; and what the minister thought of the power of *France*, at the time he joined the confederacy, we may understand from the threats and the boasts of which he was then so lavish ; as well as

from the schemes of dismemberment and partition, and even of subversion and political annihilation, then so much talked of; from whence, and from all the circumstances of the case, including the *frauds* complained of by Lord *Stanhope*, and the whole of the supercilious and insolent treatment of the ambassador *Chauvelin*, the pretence that *England*, comparatively great and powerful as she was, could not avoid the war without dishonour, must be rejected with indignation, as the most daring falsehood ever attempted to be imposed upon mankind.

Now, my Lord, having dismissed the circumstances which led to, and which were attendant on the *commencement* of the war, we are come to the consideration of those which have *followed*.

LETTER XII.

MY LORD,

BUT my mind revolts from the horrid spectacle; my pen shrinks from the calamitous detail of particulars. Brief, therefore, shall be the sketch: it is not indeed an historian we want, but a political moralist and legislator; not so much a narrative of our miseries, as a discovery of their *causes*, and of proper means and laws for their future *prevention*; and until these tasks shall be undertaken by others better qualified for the performance, even my humble endeavours may possibly be useful. In speaking of *the state of the nation*, neither external nor accidental circumstances otherwise enter into my contemplation, than as mere trifles compared with those, which, if I may so speak, are internal to the constitution itself, and essential to its preservation. Now, as fertility springs from putrefaction, and as we perpetually see in the inscrutable laws, and workings

of Divine Providence, good arising out of evil, so, from the very wickedness of the war's origin, and the necessities growing out of its direful continuance, together with its multiplied evil consequences, we shall discover important good ones already in part experienced, and others equally good made so manifest, that it is reasonably to be presumed, unless the nation be abandoned of heaven, and its final doom be decreed, it will avail itself of its experience to restore its own health, strength and prosperity.

If we see the war to have originated in corruption, profligacy, and despotism, is it no gain, no benefit, that we can trace the evil to its source? that, knowing our disease, we know our cure? that discovering the evil to have its root in the *court and borough factions*, we have a demonstration of the necessity of a *parliamentary reformation*? that as he who is nominally the minister of the crown, is in reality the minister of the factions, he must be divested of power, to make way for a minister more constitutional. If in the prosecution of this war, the *court and borough factions*, unrepresented as we are in parliament, have oppressed us with an infinity of taxes, and laid on us an additional burthen of between *three and four hundred millions*, making the whole under which we now groan, between *six and seven hundred millions*, are we not practically instructed in the excellence of that constitutional principle which says, *there shall be no taxation without representation*? If, after the shameful neglect for centuries of the *military branch of our constitution*, and the corrupt, despotic, and enormously expensive policy of raising upon its ruins a standing mercenary army, for the destruction of liberty, have we gained nothing by a war, the dangers and necessities of which has given us a force of *four hundred thousand FREE men in arms*? Have we gained nothing in discovering the *impossibility* of any mercenary defence, and that our security at last depends upon an *armed population*? Have we gained nothing in our attention, having thus been called to the *military branch of our constitution*, and in learning the necessity of its being "restored to full vigour and energy?"

In speaking, my Lord, of *the military branch of the constitution*, I may not at first be understood by any but by the gentleman who reads law with a statesman's eye, particularly such as may have studied the valuable writings of Mr. *Granville Sharp*; the tract of Sir *William Jones*, entitled "*An Inquiry into the legal means of suppressing Riots, with a constitutional plan of future defence*;" and such essays as "*The Appeal civil and military, on the English Constitution*," and "*England's Agis; or the military energies of the Empire*." Suffice it at present to say, that in the plans of military men without constitutional knowledge, we have nothing to expect, but plans, which, in proportion as they should defend our lands, would annihilate our liberties; and that in those, we have received from ministers we have to lament such evasions of the constitution as betray the cloven foot of *the faction behind the throne*. Those ministers, my Lord, ought to know, that it was no exaggeration when, six years ago, I said of the military system found in *the military branch of our constitution*, that "it holds a glorious pre-eminence over every other military system of human invention;"¹ and they ought to have restored that system, instead of giving us in its stead a lame imitation, and a fraudulent evasion of it; a wretched piece of temporary patchwork, which, as soon as they could patch up a peace was to crumble again to dust; whereby the volunteers were to be dissolved and disarmed, and the nation again committed to the keeping of those worst of goalers, a standing mercenary army.

The mountebank motley of plans and projects, of frauds and deceits, and the trickings even of a swindling complexion, for obtaining a *disposable force*, which justly gave so much offence to those who had commands in the militia, were disgraceful to an *English* government; and, towards perfecting our military system, ought to be held to be just as wide of rectitude, honesty, and good sense, as the despicable quackery of pretending to cure our state corruptions, by any thing in the

¹ Appeal, civ. and mil. on the Const. iv.

shape of an act of parliament for reforming the offices pertaining to the navy and army. Trusting, however, that the "*Appeal*," and "*England's Egis*," have in no small degree tended to communicate *constitutional* knowledge on the subject, as well as to correct and to counteract military errors, it is my intention shortly to publish to the latter the addition of a *second part*.

LETTER XIII.

IT is needless, my Lord, to look farther into *the state of the nation*, than to discover and to mark the decays of our CONSTITUTION *civil and military*. Repair those decays, and all will soon be well: every thing else will follow, as the cart, to use a homely phrase, follows the horse that draws it: but when we see the cart before the horse, we are reminded of the bubble, in which the people gave their money to see a horse with his head where his tail should be, and we know that fraud and deception are at work. When, before we have a reform of parliament, we see bills of *official* reform, and for new commissions of inquiry, in the hands of Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Rose, we see the cart before the horse; and with Junius, we must "feel an involuntary emotion within ourselves to guard against mischief."

Had not such statutes and such commissions been repeatedly tried and found wanting, I might have had faith in them. At present I have none. Like the nostrums of a quack, they repel the corrupt tumours of a corrupt body, but they neither purify the habit, nor preserve the constitution; they only drive the humour *out of sight* to prey upon the vital energies. Decayed as is the representative faculty of the body politic, and corrupt as is become the source of legislation, there can be no cure without going to the root of the evil,

without removing the cause of the malady ; and I say with Mr. *Burke*, " I am quite clear, that if we do not " go to the very origin and first ruling cause of grievances, we do nothing : " until reformation shall reach the house of Commons itself, all pretences of cure are imposture and mockery. " What does it signify to promote œconomy upon a measure, and to " suffer it to be subverted in the principle ? " ¹

Such was the former imposture of Mr. *Pitt* himself, when, in 1785, he gave you, instead of one statute for *parliamentary*, two for *official* reformation ; such the imposture of him who, in the same year, gave you that very Navy Pay Office statute, for the gross violation of which by himself, he is now impeached ; a statute in which he seems to have outwitted himself, as it was so loosely worded, that he now tells the House of Commons it was not *intended* to forbid that which they charge upon him as a crime ! and such also the imposture of Mr. *Burke* himself, one of whose direct purposes in the *official* reforms he so paradingly introduced was to "*baffle*" the friends of a parliamentary reformation. " I would persuade," says he, " a resistance " both to the corruption and to the reformation, that " prevails. It will not be weaker but much stronger for " combatting both together. A victory over real corruptions would enable us to *baffle* the spurious the pretended reformations." ² I do not claim half the *merit* for " what I did, as for what I *prevented from being done*." ³ This is the man, who, so long ago as 1774, in reply to a sophistical argument for taxing *America* by an *English* parliament, had indignantly replied,—" He says, " that if they are not free in their present state, *England* " *land* is not free ; because *Manchester* and other " considerable places, are not represented. So then, " because some towns in *England* are not represented, " *America* is to have no representation at all. They " are our children ; but when children ask for bread, we " are not to give a stone. Is it because the natural resistance of things, and the various mutations of time,

¹ Speech on securing the Independence of parliament, p. 18.
² Letter to Elliott, vol. vii. 368, ³ Letter to a Noble Lord, 23.

“ hinders our government, or any government from
 “ being any more than a sort of approximation to the
 “ right, is it therefore that the colonies are to recede
 “ from it infinitely? When this child of ours wishes to
 “ assimilate to its parent, and to reflect with a true filial
 “ reverence the beauteous countenance of *British* liberty;
 “ are we to turn to them the *shameful parts of our*
 “ *constitution*? Are we to give them our *weakness* for
 “ their strength? our *opprobrium* for their glory? and
 “ the *slough of slavery which we are not able to work*
 “ *off*, to serve them for their freedom?”¹

Lord North too, when his *American* war had filled the nation with misery and discontent, but not before, had become an *official* reformer; and indeed set the fashion to Messieurs *Burke*, *Pitt*, and *Dundas*, (now Lord *Melville*;) and among them we had in the course of seven years *sixteen* statutes for correcting *official* abuses and corruptions; and, including revivals we had in all *twenty-four* of them prior to that for which we are indebted to the Earl of *St. Vincent*. But where, my Lord, is the rich fruit of these reforms promised us by Mr. *Burke*, when he says, “a disposition to expence was complained of; to that I opposed, not mere retrenchment, but a *system of economy*, which would make a random expence without plan or foresight, *in future not easily practicable*. I proceeded upon principles of research to put me in possession of my matter; on principles of method to regulate it; and on principles in the human mind and in civil affairs *to secure and perpetuate the operation*. Hereafter, *no civil list debt* can ever come upon the public. It extinguishes secret corruption almost to the possibility of its existence. It destroys direct and visible influence equal to the offices of at least fifty members of parliament.² Whatever I did at that time, so far as it regarded order or *economy*, is *stable and eternal*; as all principles must be.”³ This to be sure is mighty fine in an oration. But I wish to know, where was this bar to the *possibility* of fresh civil list debts,

¹ Speech 19th. April, 1774. p. 91.

² Let. to a noble Lord. 23. ³ Ib. 32.

when Mr. Pitt twice or thrice since came to parliament for very large sums to pay the creditors! And I ask, what reason we have to imagine that Mr. Burke either made secret corruption less practicable, or parliament more independent, than before? And where, I again ask, in real practical operation, is this *perpetuation* of the orator's system? this *stability* and *eternity* of his oeconomy? Where is his restriction of *secret service money* at home to *ten thousand pounds* a year?¹ Where his "*victory over real corruptions*," by which he was to "*baffle*" the parliamentary reformers, by rendering their system unnecessary? For these happy effects I have inquired in vain. I have sought them in the numerous folio volumes of the commissioners of *naval inquiry*; but they are full of new abuses, new corruptions, and new misapplications of public money; which, unless that reform which Mr. Burke "*baffled*" shall previously take place, present us with an *Augean* stable which not even a *Hercules* could cleanse. Shall we not then from experience retort upon "*this sputious, this pretended reformer*," the words he himself applied on conjecture to Mr. Pitt's plan of parliamentary reform in 1785. "But this measure was only an illusion, from which no solid benefit could ever result." For his part, he considered the whole of it as mere "delusion, an *ignis fatuus*, calculated to mislead and "bewilder."² All that we distinctly see respecting secret service money is, that exclusive of acknowledged misapplications, one sum of *ten thousand pounds* not only went *secretly* into the pockets of somebody, but for that purpose was *secretly* seized upon, out of money granted for the service of the navy, and forbidden by an express law to be otherwise applied; and Lord Melville in his speech at the bar of the house of commons, lets them know he is determined to "*baffle*" all inquiry about it. Is Mr. Burke's "*victory over real corruptions*" found in the departments of the *army*, the *ordnance*, the *barracks*, where abuse and corruption are now the subjects of new acts of parliament? No, my

¹ See 22 Geo. III. c. 82. ² Wyvill's Polit. papers, II. 432, 434. Thoughts on the causes of the present discontents. Ed. 1780. p. 48, 87.

Lord, here is no victory of reform over corruption ; but, on the contrary, a victory of corruption over reform ; and such indeed (to borrow words from the reforming orator,) must *perpetually* and *eternally* be the case, until you shall dry up the source of the mischief in the house of commons itself.

The wily politician when he first published his oration on *official economy*, called it a speech, on presenting "A PLAN FOR THE BETTER SECURITY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF PARLIAMENT, &c." and in the introductory argument he expressly says, "I am quite clear, that if we do not go to the very origin and first ruling cause of grievances, *we do nothing* :"¹ and towards "better securing the independence of parliament," NOTHING HE DID, as every one knows ; and notwithstanding this declaration, so far was he from intending to "go to the very origin and first ruling cause of grievances," that the very object of his plan was to "*baffle*" those who did honestly attempt it, as he himself has since, under his own pensioned hand, assured us. How anxious he was to "*baffle*" the real reformers of parliament, a good judge will discern, from observing that into his plan and his oration, he had put the whole industry of his energetic nature, the whole powers of his vigorous and comprehensive mind, and all the persuasiveness of his admirable eloquence. When it suited the factious purpose of the orator, no man could paint the loathsomeness of parliamentary corruption in stronger colours than himself ; for, ten years prior to his plan of official reform, he had said, "When the people conceive that *laws*, and *tribunals*, and even *POPULAR ASSEMBLIES*, are perverted from the ends of their institution, they find in those names of *degenerated establishments*, only new motives of discontent. Those bodies which when full of life and beauty, lay in their arms, and were their joy and comfort, when DEAD AND PUTRID, become but the more LOATHSOME from remembrance of former endearments."²

r. p. 18. 2 Thoughts on the causes of the present discontents. p. 56.

And although his sagacity had early perceived, that, in respect of the politics of the *faction behind the throne*, "*parliament* was indeed the great object of all these politics, the *end* at which they aimed, as well as the *instrument* by which they were to operate;"¹ although for ten years he had witnessed the truth of these observations made in 1770; and although after ten years more, including the greater part of the *American* war, of still more shocking experience, and even talking in 1780 of going "to the very origin and first ruling cause of grievances," yet we find nothing could prevail with him to act against his own innate hatred of popular freedom, so predominant, and so active at all times was that principle in his mind, that he was ever vigilant to discern the most distant approach of popular demands for an amended representation and a shorter duration of parliaments; and what his sagacity in 1770, with prophetic eye *foresaw*, he artfully endeavoured at the same time by anticipation, to "*baffle*" and *defeat*. As it then suited his purpose, he inflamed the discontents of the people, that he might make use of them against the court, in favour of his party; and in doing this it became necessary to shew how *parliament* had been "made subservient to a system, by which it was to be degraded from the dignity of a national council, into a mere member of the court;" that it was corrupt, and "DEAD and PUTRID," even to "LOATHSOMENESS;" but that the people might only clamour against the court for a change of ministers, without obtaining for themselves any real redress of grievances, he introduces arguments for shewing it is neither expedient nor practicable, to amend our representation; and when he speaks of *representation* itself, he, like almost all dealers in sophistry and delusion, resorts to the fraudulent trick of a *figurative* application of this plain word, when the *literal* application ought to be used; in order to divert his reader from its *legal* and *constitutional* signification: I must conclude these observations with remarking, that although the *Thoughts on the*

1 *Thoughts on the causes of the present discontents* p. 7.

cause of the present discontents is one of the finest arguments that ever was penned, for shewing the necessity of a radical reform in our representation, yet its author could "see no other way for the preservation of a *decent* "attention to public interest in the representatives, but "the *interposition of the body of the people itself*, whenever it shall appear by some flagrant and notorious "act, by some capital innovation, that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law, "and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy."¹

The reforming acts of parliament I have spoken of are as follows; in the king's 20th. year, c. 54; 21st. year, c. 45, 48; 22d. year, c. 50, 75, 81, 82; 23d. year, c. 50, 68; 24th. year, c. 13; 25th. year, c. 52, 68; 26th. year, c. 63, 66, 67, 99; 27th. year, c. 35; 29th. year, c. 64; 32d. year, c. 33, 34; 38th. year, c. 86; 39th. year, 83; and 40th. year, c. 22, 54.

LETTER XIV.

MY LORD,

AS we have heard so much about the *fifth clause* of Lord St. Vincent's act, inserted after it got into the house of lords as an *amendment* or *improvement*; and of which clause so many persons from a *first lord of the Admiralty* downwards took advantage, so that in their answers to the commissioners, not as persons under accusation, but as stewards called upon to render an account of their stewardship, they might not criminate themselves; it may not be amiss to shew the spirit of former acts among the foregoing number. By the first of those, an act to examine the public accounts, &c.

¹ See P. 98. 130.

all manner of persons summoned by the commissioners, are "directed and required" to attend, and to obey their commands, and although the commission extends to an examination into corrupt and fraudulent practices, they are to be examined upon oath, without any special clause to put them upon their guard and protect them against disclosures: and the preamble of this statute professes that it is passed "to the intent that "his Majesty, and the people of this kingdom, may be "satisfied and truly informed whether" the public monies "have been faithfully issued out, disbursed, ordered, and expended, *for the ends and purposes for which they were granted.*"

By the "act for the better examining and auditing the public accounts of this kingdom," in 1785, c. 52, the commissioners are to examine upon *oath* all accountants and others whom they shall find occasion to call before them, touching all matters and things necessary for the due execution of their powers. If any of these persons "shall wilfully and corruptly give false evidence, they shall be "subject and liable to such "pains and penalties as, by any law now in being, "persons convicted of wilful and corrupt perjury are "subject and liable to."

And again by the act for examination of public accounts in the West Indies, passed 31st. of December, 1800, all accountants, and all persons who "may be likely to give useful information," are liable to be called before the commissioners; and in default of appearing, or refusing to answer, may be imprisoned; and when examined, it is to be upon *oath*, with the pains and penalties of *perjury* for false evidence, in a clause almost verbatim the same as the one already quoted.

Blackstone, in speaking of the powers of the court of chancery, seems to consider as the best among them, "that of obtaining a discovery by the oath of the defendant;"¹ and as so much pains have been taken in the act passed 29th. December, 1802, as well as by Mr. Pitt and very nearly half the house of commons, to "baffle" the commissioners of naval inquiry, and all

1 Com. III, 50, 6th. edit. 1774.

others who have exerted themselves to give effect to this last mentioned statute for *official* reform; it seems somewhat surprising that no one should have brought a bill into parliament for applying the principle of chancery examinations of *defendants*, who of course are *accused* of some wrong, to *public accountants* and *stewards*, who are not under any such charge; and who ought to be considered as owing to the state a full account and disclosure of every thing they know, respecting the monies with which they have been entrusted. If such an act were only to have a prospective effect, public accountants and stewards could in future have no cause to complain; unless we are to admit that every man who, by accepting a public *trust*, and coming within reach of the public money, is to be encouraged and aided in embezzling as much of it as he can without detection, and that neither parliamentary commissioners, nor parliament itself, ought to receive from himself any assistance in tracing it, but what he chuses to give them.

Is it not, my Lord, strongly symptomatic of the state disease of our times, that there seems to be more tenderness in matter of examination upon *oath*, for those who are the *peculators of public money*, than for those who *pay the taxes* by which it is raised? By the act (August 11, 1803) for levying a tax upon property, although a man shall *bona fide* have delivered in a statement of his property, against which statement the proper officers shall not have given any "information" of its incorrectness, nor shall have made any "objection thereto," yet the person, if the commissioners please, may be harrassed with a compulsory summons to appear before them, and there obliged to verify his statement upon *oath*; and it should seem that the party must take such oath under a liability to all the pains and penalties of false swearing, if *Blackstone* be right; for he says, "that is the crime of wilful and corrupt *perjury*; which is defined by Sir *Edward Coke*, to be a crime committed when a *lawful* oath is administered, in some *judicial* proceeding, to a person who swears *wilfully, absolutely, and falsely*, in a matter *material* to the issue or point in question. The

"law takes no notice of any perjury but such as is committed in some court of justice, having power to administer an oath; or *before some magistrate or pro-per officer, invested with a similar authority*, in some proceedings *relative* to a civil suit or a criminal prosecution."¹ And between the two cases under consideration there is this strong distinction, that in this latter case a man is compellable to make on oath a disclosure of the amount of *his own property*, for the purpose of paying a tax "given and granted" by a house of commons, which *does not represent the nation*; whereas, in the former case, a man is not to be so compellable to make a disclosure of *property belonging to the state*, and committed to him *in trust*, for the purpose of preventing embezzlement, or of recovering what has been embezzled.

In the act of the last session, appointing a commission for inquiring into abuses in the army department; there is a protecting clause, the same verbatim as the *fifth* clause of Lord St. Vincent's act; which says "no person shall be compellable to answer any question, or to *produce any Account, Book, Paper, or Writing*, the answer to which, or the production of which may criminate or tend to criminate such person, or to expose such person to any pains or penalties." Hence it should seem that "*Accounts, Books, Papers, or Writings*" even though *belonging to a Public Office*, and the *property of the government*, as Trustees of the nation, may be withholden from the prying eyes of commissioners, provided the keeper of them shall chuse to think they contain matter "tending" to prove he has betrayed his trust; that is, matter which may assist the commissioners in such an inquiry. If commissioners of inquiry are to have less latitude of investigation into the frauds and embezzlements in the public offices, than the court of chancery has into the conduct of private defendants at the suit of a private plaintiff, the nation has not much to expect from such commissioners; and will perhaps consider them as an

1 Com. iv, 137. 6th. edit. 1774.

additional proof of the necessity of the reformation for which we contend.

Now, my Lord, if we have not *Moses and the prophets* to teach us the law and constitution of our country, we have another sort of instructors whose teachings will not, I trust, be thrown away upon us: we have the *two hundred and sixteen*, we have the *two hundred and twenty nine*, who voted, the first, AGAINST Mr. *Whitbread's* motion of the 8th. of April, for a censure against Lord *Melville*, carried only by a *single* solitary suffrage; the last, AGAINST the motion of the 25th. of June, for criminally prosecuting that delinquent, carried only by a majority of *nine*: and all this, in a case in which it is known that above *one hundred and thirty four millions of public money* had illegally passed through improper channels, by the *privity* and *connivance* of the person in whose favour they voted. With these votes staring us in the face, do we want *Moses and the prophets* to preach parliamentary reformation? Or shall we call from the patriot dead, a *Savile*, a *Shippen*, or a *Marvel*, to reproach us with our depravity, and with the infamy of submitting to the insulting usurpation of the *Borough faction*? When we see such immense proportions of the house of commons in contempt of decency, and in defiance of the nation, openly voting for a gross violation of law, for ministerial impunity after proof of daring and disgraceful crimes, and for official abuse and flagrant corruption, we see with a witness the progress of Mr. *Arthur Young's* rewarded doctrines, that that house "*does not*," and "*ought not* to represent the people;" that it "*is not responsible* to the people;" and that "*our prosperity and happiness* " is owing precisely to the house of commons *not* speaking the will of the people;"¹ and upon this damning proof of the iniquity, and daring character of the court and borough factions, we cannot but see, that unless the nation shall crumble those factions to dust, the factions will grind the nation to powder.

1 See the Common Wealth in danger, xliii, xliv, cxxiv.

LETTER XV.

MY LORD,

BUT so surprising an event was it in an *English* house of commons, to have a majority of one,—ONE, in favour of *the people*, that silly men burst into raptures at *the virtue of the house*; and factious men echoed this nonsense till it became nauseous. Yes truly, my Lord, we are much beholden to that house for its *virtue*! Elected the great *attorney*, the head *steward* of the nation, and entrusted with the title deeds to the nation's inheritance of political liberty, the first proof of *uncommon virtue* it gave, was to embezzle those deeds, and then, *misquoting* them, to dispossess six parts in seven at least of the people, of their inestimable birthright and sacred franchise, of electing representatives.² The Duke of *Gloucester*, who now governed in the infancy of the King, found about this time a general discontent, at the expence and the disasters, of the war in *France*; wherefore, he probably resorted to this gross violation of liberty, as a means of keeping down the influence of the people on parliament, and of increasing his own influence among the wealthier sort, thus raised by him above their fellows. In the 9th. of that king, the restrictions of the act were still more narrowed; and there seems reason to believe that in the 10th. year, in resentment for these statutes, the people assaulted on their way to *Westminster*, some members of parliament; because in the 11th. year we find a statute assigning “the punishment of those that make assault upon any that come to the parliament.” By another instance of *uncommon virtue*, the house of Commons deprived the remaining electors of the exercise of this franchise for two years in every three; thus compelling them to retain in their service, the same

² 8 Hen. vi, 7.

servants for three years continuance at a time, although those servants should have openly taken bribes to betray their masters, or had let thieves into the house, or had themselves been the robbers of it: 1 and by a third effort of *uncommon virtue*, it extended this privation to six years of every seven; 2 and in order to make sure of the object of these *virtuous* endeavours for the good of the people, it took especial care to have plenty of court placemen among its members; and it has had the farther *virtue* to resist all attempts for preventing a great number of *peers*, through the farce of what is called, borough *elections*, from disposing of even *hundreds* of its seats amongst their agents, led-captains, and other dependants; and, to complete all, its *virtue* has provided for the ordering, regulating, fortifying, and defending so admirable a system, no less than *one hundred and twelve statutes*, constituting such a barricado, of net within net, web within web, and furnished with such a host of law spiders, that woe be unto either buzzing fly, busy bee, angry wasp, or even the most formidable hornet, that shall dare to attack this *sanctum sanctorum* of the borough faction!

“ *Parliaments* are the true guardians of liberty. For this principally they were instituted; and this is the principal article of that great and noble trust, which the collective body of the people of *Britain* reposes in the representative; but then no slavery can be so effectually brought and fixed upon us, as *parliamentary slavery*. By the corruption of *parliament*, and the absolute influence of a king or his minister, on the two houses, we return unto that state, to deliver or to secure us from which *parliaments* were instituted, and are really governed by the arbitrary will of *one man*. Our whole constitution is at once dissolved. Many securities to liberty are provided; but the integrity, which depends on the freedom and independency of *parliament*, is the key-stone that keeps the whole together. If this be shaken our constitution totters. If it be quite removed, our constitution falls to ruin. That noble fabrick, the pride

1 6 William. and M. 2.

2 I Geo. III, 38.

" of *Britain*, the envy of her neighbours, raised by
 " the labour of so many centuries, repaired at the ex-
 " pence of so many millions, and cemented by such a
 " profusion of blood; that noble fabrick, I say, which
 " was able to resist the united efforts of so many races
 " of giants, may be demolished by a race of pigmies.
 " The integrity of parliament is a kind of palladium,
 " a tutelary goddess, who protects our state. When
 " she is once removed, we may become the prey of any
 " enemies. No *Agamemnon*; no *Achilles* will be
 " wanted to take our city. **THERSITES HIMSELF**
 " **WILL BE SUFFICIENT FOR SUCH A CON-**
 " **QUEST.**"¹ Again: the rights claimed at the revolution
 " ought to have been more than claimed, since
 " they had been so often and so lately invaded. That
 " they were not more than claimed, that they were
 " not effectually asserted and secured, at this time;
 " gave very great and immediate dissatisfaction; and
 " they who were called *Whigs* in those days, distin-
 " guished themselves by the loudness of their com-
 " plaints. Thus for instance they insisted that there
 " could be no real settlement, nay, that it was a jest to
 " talk of settlement, till the *manner* and *time* of call-
 " ing parliaments, and their *sitting*, when called, were
 " *fully determined*; and this, in order to prevent the
 " practice of keeping ONE and the SAME PARLIAMENT
 " so long on foot, till the majority was *corrupted* by
 " offices, gifts, and pensions. They insisted that the
 " assurances given at the revolution, had led them to
 " think that the antient, legal course of ANNUALLY
 " CHOSEN PARLIAMENTS, would have been imme-
 " diately restored."

In February, 1780, Sir *George Savile*, moved for a
 full disclosure of the PENSION LIST. It was resisted
 by the minister, who moved and carried an amend-
 ment, by which the *secret* part of the list was still kept
 in the dark. The minority on that question was 188;
 the majority only 190, and composed as follows:

1 Bolingbroke, Diss. upon Parties, 116. 126. 6th. Edit. 1749.

Pensioners, avowedly so	6
Contractors	14
Placemen	94
Sons of placemen or others nearly related	26
Members under no visible influence	50
	<hr/>
	190 ¹

Here then, had the principles of impannelling and *challenging*, a *Jury* prevailed, the minister instead of stifling inquiry by a majority of *two*, would have lost his stifling amendment by a majority of *one hundred and thirty eight*. But, supposing no corrupt influence, and the minister to have had upon the whole as many votes as in the proportion of 50 to 190, his whole number would then have been only 87, in which case the majority against him would have been *two hundred and four*, instead of gaining his point by *two*. A writer of eminence in the reign of *William*, had early noticed the effects of the *Triennial Bill*, and the corruptions that issued, when he says, "and though I here name *offices*, "yet those offices are downright *bribes*, since they are "held precariously from the court, and constantly taken away upon non-compliance with the court measures."²

About seven years ago, we had published in our Newspapers,³ comparative lists of the House of Commons as follows.

Members holding offices, commissions, and employments of honour or emolument ;	}	129
[or in other words <i>bribed</i> ,]		
Near relations of such,		19
Members who had received titles from Mr. Pitt,		7
Loan Contractors, &c.		9
		<hr/>
		164

¹ Taken from lists published in the year.

² *The Danger of mercenary Parliaments, with the infinite mischiefs of long and packed parliaments*, by the author of the Letters of the Earl of Shaftesbury to Lord Molesworth. p. 12.

³ Morn. Chron. 12th January, 1798.

Now supposing, for the sake of argument, even that no greater number than this were under such influences on the 8th of April last, and by those means, giving in the whole 216 votes to the minister, it would then follow that the number of his friends "under no visible influence," would only have been 52; so that in an independent house of commons on that occasion we must reckon 164 to be subtracted from the minister, and the same number added to Mr. *Whitbread*; in which case that gentleman, instead of his majority of ONE, including the Speaker, would have had a majority of THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY without the Speaker. Had such been the fact, the shameful things since done by the minister and his unblushing factions, so often in this work alluded to, would not have taken place under the eye of a disgusted nation.

That either sophistry or habit should ever have reconciled *Englishmen*, among whom it would incur a perpetual stain of infamy to corrupt a *single Juror*, in a private cause, to a *whole host of placemen* in a house of commons, openly bribed against the interest of the people by power and rich emoluments, must upon reflection excite astonishment: nor less ought we to wonder, on looking back upon the apparent unconcern with which the people have looked on, while houses of commons so packed have voted, even with scarcely a debate or division, hundreds of millions in prosecuting the wars of factions to the misery of the nation: but as fast as a people actually lose their political liberty, (for which *representation* is a synonymous word) they lose the knowledge of its use and value, as well as the easy and most regular mode of obtaining a redress of grievances. They have none then left but those of personal exertion, union and perseverance; and civilised nations, who are lovers of ease, are not to be brought to such efforts, but by the excess of misery, or the imminency of danger, from oppression, misgovernment, or wanton abuses of power. While considering a house of commons as "in the higher" "part of government what juries are in the lower,"¹

¹ *Burke's Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents*, p. 66.

we are however always to keep in mind this important distinction ; that, in real juries there is to be, if possible, perfect *indifference* between the parties at issue ; and, in criminal trials, this indifference is obtained by the crown challenging and striking off all such as can be suspected of partiality to the accused ; and by the accused, in like manner, striking off all such as, from influence or from mere opinion, can be suspected of the least leaning to the crown, that could influence the uprightness of their verdict. But it is only metaphorically that a house of commons is called a jury ; and it is a mere figure of speech, when we speak of it as a national inquest. It is indeed a part of its duty to *inquire* into all abuses of power ; but then, when it have made the discovery, it is to *impeach* and *prosecute* ; whence we see that it is no *jury*, intended to be *indifferent* between the crown and the people themselves ; not at all in the nature of an indifferent *jury* between parties at issue, but the *attorney* of one of the parties to oppose all improper attempts of the other ; and in the words of Mr. *Burke*, “ it was not instituted to be a “ controul *upon* the people,” but “ a controul *for* the “ people,”¹ over the crown and its ministers. If therefore it would be infamous for a party at issue, in an ordinary trial for ten pounds, to bribe a single jurymen, or for one of the parties corruptly to get upon the jury even one of his own servants ; it must be a thousand times more infamous, habituated as we are to the abominable sight, corruptly to thrust into a commons house of parliament, half the king’s ministers, and an immense host of placemen and hungry dependents ! ! ! What should we have thought, if upon the trial of Lord *Thanes*, or Mr. *Wakefield*, or *Thomas Hardy*, the Attorney General had paid no regard to the law, (as others pay none to the constitution,) nor to the challenges of the accused, but supported by the Judge, had thrust upon the jury a majority from those very servants of the crown, who in the spring of 1794 had been upon the Committee of Secrecy, of the PEOPLE’S ATTOR-

¹ *Burke’s Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents*, p. 68.

NIES, or House of COMMONS, appointed to investigate the proceedings of the popular societies ; as for instance Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, now Lord Melville, Mr. Jenkinson, (now Lord Hawkesbury,) Lord Mulgrave, Lord Mornington, (now Marquis of Wellesley,) Mr. R. Dundas, (then Lord Advocate) and Mr. Burke, the Pensioner? Could we have been surprized if such a monstrous proceeding for destroying an individual, had produced a revolution destructive of the entire government?—But do we not see the exact counterpart of all this, for the purpose of destroying the liberty of the whole nation, and seizing on its whole property, in the present construction of a house of commons?

It may be considered as very extraordinary, that, from the accession of *Charles* the first, in 1625, to the end of that century, a period abounding with the greatest patriots and the most illustrious writers, no one, not even *Coke* or *Milton*, *Harrington* or *Locke*, should have discussed with precision, as a distinct subject, that part of the science of civil government, which includes the whole theory of REPRESENTATION, including of course the right duration of the representative body: and this defect is the more remarkable, because the *English* constitution in its purity, agreeably both to antient practice, and to the eternal principles of truth and justice, applying to this particular branch of knowledge, which are abundantly scattered through the old books of our law, contained all the elements of this part of the science, constituting the proud distinction of that constitution, over every other in the world: and it is more surprizing that this part of the science of government should have been so overlooked, when it is certain, that every violation of liberty by *Charles* the first, by the long parliament, by the army after the death of *Charles*, by *Cromwell*, by *Charles* the second, by *James* the second, nor must I except *William* the third, were all, without exception, the consequences of wanting a legislative representation agreeable in all particulars to the principles of the science of civil government, and to the principles of the *English* Constitution. All the authors I have named, with *Nedham*, *Ludlow*, *Sidney*, *Hooker*, and in short every writer friendly to the

liberties of his country incidentally ground their arguments on some of the principles referred to; but *Locke* the most; and *Prynne* and *Johnson* lay great stress on a short duration of parliaments; and the septennial act of 1716, afterwards gave rise to much good argumentation against that unprincipled stretch of power; which was frequently revived, but chiefly in parliament; but still, nothing luminous and satisfactory *as a whole*, and embracing all that belongs to REPRESENTATION, was attempted till three parts in four of another century had elapsed. On this topic, we read *Bolinbroke*, *Hume*, and *Blackstone*, with no instruction; nay the latter rather teaches us ignorance than knowledge; at which we must not be surprized, when it is a fact, that his celebrated Commentaries on our laws, had run through several editions before the word CONSTITUTION found a place in the Index. Mine is the *sixth* edition, and in the Index to that no such word occurs; nor in the work itself is there any evidence, that it had ever occurred to its learned author, that there was a distinction between the constitution and the law; which yet is as palpable to any attentive observer, as the distinction between a Constituent and a Representative Body; or between a Legislature and an Executive Government.

As free discussion in our mother tongue banished from our country its papal ignorance and folly, and effected a reformation in matters of religion, which, as embracing our views and interests in another world, is doubtless attended with serious difficulties; so, *a fortiori*, it must be concluded that representation, which merely relates to the plain business of this life, will by free discussion become perfectly understood; in which case it must produce a reformation in matters of civil government: and as experience shews that on this point we have now perhaps little or nothing to learn, that reformation therefore cannot be far distant; especially as the political popery of the day cannot inspire the people with any fear of eternal damnation, for listening to the reformers; while the monstrous absurdities and iniquities of that political popery shock every unprejudiced mind to

which they are presented; and the temporal ruin and misery in its train must shortly drive the nation into the reformation as the only haven of its salvation.

But let me return to the practical violation of REPRESENTATION I was noticing. In the newspaper publication above mentioned, we had at the same time an account of the distribution of the 558 members, of whom the house then consisted; as follows:

Returned by the influence of, or nominated	
by Peers, }	243
By Commoners having Boroughs.	159
By the TREASURY,	22
	<hr/>
	424
By the voice of the People, }	134
[says the statement,] }	
	<hr/>
	558

Admitting for a moment the accuracy of this distribution, and likewise admitting for a moment, the whole of the hundred *Irish* members, to be chosen by the voice of the people, yet even then this statement would shew that nearly two parts in three of the present *six hundred and fifty eight* members of which the house consists, is returned by PEERS, other BOROUGH PROPRIETORS, and the TREASURY; and this without regard to the BRIBES, afterwards given in the shape of "*offices, commissions, and employments of honour or emolument,*" to one fourth part or more of the whole house; for I have not yet spoken of any placemen, among the one hundred *Irish* members. But, were we rigidly to scrutinize the grounds upon which it is assumed that, 134 members were, "returned by the voice of the People," I fear we should find it difficult to ascertain that even *ten*—a number that would have saved *Sodom*,—are now so returned; for certain I am, that in those places, where there is, to the eye of ignorance, the greatest show of popular freedom, it is more in show than substance; and that the utter impossibility, of men of moderate fortunes standing a contest, added to all other causes, does in fact nearly destroy every

trace of really free elections, such as the *principles* of the *English Constitution* require, and such as the *practice* of *English America* exhibits.

For ought that I know to the contrary, a considerable proportion of the gentlemen now in parliament, might under the purest elective system, be returned as Representatives of the People. The objection at present is not personally to *men*, but to *means*. In members of parliament we want *Representatives*, not arbitrary lords and masters; faithful *stewards* to take care of our estate; not bribed agents, to swindle us out of the estate, and put another in possession; honest *attornies* to transact our business with the Crown, not kidnappers to clap us in chains, and sell us to a slave-master: and the very man who, under a bad system, may be tempted to play the kidnapper or the despot, under a good system, may be a very attentive, diligent, faithful representative.

LETTER XVI.

MY LORD,

ONE striking feature in the present system is the *expence*; so that no man possessing such estates as those of a *Shippen*, a *Marvel*, a *Milton*, or a *Locke*, although possessing merit, as transcendent as such bright examples of public virtue, can now enter the house of commons, except as the dependents of great men, a condition to which no such men could submit. The evil of expence is properly noticed in the well known petition, standing on the Journal of the Commons, for the 6th of May 1793; where amongst other matter it is said,—“That the expence to each of the parties, who “have been either plaintiff or defendant in petitions, “tried before your honourable house in the present

" session, has, upon an average, amounted to above one
 " hundred pounds per day ; and that the attornies bills
 " in one case, the trial of which in point of form only
 " lasted two days, and in point of fact only six hours,
 " amounted to very near *twelve hundred pounds*." It is
 indeed well known, as I have on another occasion ob-
 served, that to contest a county is to risk an estate ; and
 to appeal against a return, is equivalent to disinheriting
 half a gentleman's children, although he be a man of
 large estate. Can we be surprized then, when we hear
 of a candidate for a western county, the young heir of a
 man raised to wealth from being a *writer*, that is, a
clerk, in the East Indies, shaking his purse at all the
 country gentlemen in derision and *terrorem* ?

But we learn in a speech made on the 30th of April
 1792, in the court of king's bench, respecting the *West-*
minster election of 1788, that, about, " a *thirtieth* or
 " *fortieth* part only of its merits was entered into, and
 " its costs, for the petitioner alone, amounted to up-
 " wards of fourteen thousand pounds." Again : " In
 " little more than four years, *one hundred thousand*
 " *pounds*, on *each* side, was expended on the city of
 " *Westminster*."—After naming several persons in high
 offices who contributed on the side of the court to the
 expence, the speaker adds, " I could take the list out of
 " my pocket and read them to you. They may have
 " their actions or informations against me, if they
 " please, and I have no objection to a trial on that
 " question. I can prove the fact. As the rest of the
 " money was furnished by the SECRETARY OF THE
 " TREASURY, he best can tell from whence it came."

Proceeding to shew the magnitude of the expence
 which, under the act of 28 Geo. III. c. 52. the noble
 Lord who in that year had been the petitioner, might,
 had he persisted, have been put to, he says, " If he, as
 " I have done, had contested with *two* adversaries, and
 " had been found *frivolous* and *vexatious*, his own ex-
 " pence of *fourteen thousand pounds*, would not have
 " been thought sufficient punishment for him, or suf-
 " ficient discouragement to others ; but he must have
 " been adjudged to pay the whole costs for the three,
 " which would have amounted at least to *forty two*

" *thousand pounds, and this only for a fortieth part of*
 " his petition. If he had gone through the whole of
 " his petition, and it had been voted frivolous and vexa-
 " tious, the costs for him to pay would have amounted
 " to above a *million and a half* of money. A tolerable
 " penalty this, without *the intervention of a Jury*; and
 " upon a man too, not necessarily supposed, to possess
 " more than a life estate of 300*l.* a year, that is, a prin-
 " cipal of about 3000*l.* And for what crime is this
 " monstrous punishment inflicted? For being a can-
 " didate to represent the people. Upon whom think
 " you this storm was intended to fall? Upon any
 " *independent* friend of his country; who must con-
 " sequently be of no faction, but against all factions,
 " and must therefore have all factions against him."—
 " *Frivolous and vexatious* are new crimes invented in
 " 1768; the judgment and application of which crimes,
 " the *usurpers* of the representation of the people, the
 " private proprietors of stolen boroughs, have reserved
 " to themselves; for this act of parliament does not
 " leave you, the jury, to enter into the merits of the
 " case, (upon which however, you are upon your oaths
 " to pronounce,) nor into any thing that relates to its
 " merits. And for this most * * * * act of
 " parliament, we are obliged to the *pretended reformer*
 " of the representation in parliament, the present most
 " treacherous and deceitful minister."

Will not these reflections present to our minds such a
State of the Nation, respecting its LEGISLATIVE RE-
 PRESENTATION, or, in other words, its POLITICAL
 LIBERTY, as, provided we had no means of redressing
 ourselves, ought to excite in our hearts more fear, than
 if *Bonaparte* were in the heart of the kingdom at the
 head of five hundred thousand men?

Let me here, my Lord, suppose that ornament of
 our country and of human nature, Sir *William Jones*,
 to have survived his labours in *Bengal*, and to have re-
 turned to his native land, where he must have enjoyed
 the universal reverence of all who respect what is
 great and good, and where, not only from the capaci-
 ties but the natural bent of his grand mind, he must

instinctively have felt the Commons House of parliament to be his proper element; what borough, let me ask your grace, spurning at a patron's command, would have chosen this uncorrupting and incorruptible man as the depository of its constitutional rights, and the representative of its political power? What *English* cities, rivalling those honourable cities of *Greece* which contended for the glory of having given birth to *Homer*, would have contended for the glory of being the constituent of *Jones*? Or what county, forgetting in its admiration of wisdom and virtue, the littlenesses of faction and the habits of servility, but imitating *Rome* when by a solemn embassy she drew from his *Sabine* retirement to place on her throne, the godlike son of *Pomponius*¹ and pupil of the muse *Egeria*,—what county, I ask would have so drawn from his retirement to have personified her in the national legislature, this accomplished lawyer, this first of scholars, this “most enlightened of the sons of men,”² this inflexible patriot? O, no my Lord, with anguish I feel that no such embassy would have visited the retirement of him who long since had said, and whose whole life had proved the truth of the assertion “The time never was, when I would have enlisted under the banners of any faction;—my party is that of the whole people, my principles, which the law taught me, are only to be changed by a change of existence;”³ O no, my Lord, far from the din and strife of contending factions, such a man would have been left undisturbed at his books and meditations in the cottage⁴ of learning and wisdom, sighing over the consideration of what, by union and energy, of half a score men of rank and influence, devoting themselves to their country, might effect; as when thus he addressed lord *Althorpe*, now Earl *Spencer*. “As to the *καλλυψισια* [regeneration] of our noble constitution which has happily presented itself to your ima-

¹ Numa. ² Dr. Johnson. See Memoirs 531. ³ Ibid—331.

⁴ “I had flattered myself with a hope of making a visit to our venerable friend [Dr. Franklin] at *Philadelphia*, before the retreat which I meditate to my humble cottage in Middlesex.”

Letter to Dr. Price. Memoirs 340.

"gination, the very idea fixes me with rapture. No, my dear Lord, never believe that any thing is impossible to virtue; no, if TEN SUCH AS YOU conceive such sentiments as your letter contains, and express them as forcibly, if you retain these sentiments, as you certainly will, when you take your place in parliament I will not despair of seeing the most glorious of sights, *a nation freely governed by its own laws*. This I promise, that, if such a decemvirate should ever attempt to restore our constitutional liberty by constitutional means, I would exert in their cause, such talents as I have, and, even if I were oppressed with sickness, and torn with pain, would start from my couch, and exclaim with Trebonius, *if you mean to act worthily, O Romans! I am well*."¹

Think, my Lord, on what must be *the state of the Nation*, when we cannot figure to ourselves the means, by which such a man as Sir *William Jones* could now gain admission into the house of Commons; while the doors of that house are thrown wide and invitingly open to every son of rapine and violence, of ignorance and vulgarity,—to the plunderer of the East, and the slave-holder of the West, to the loan-hunting locust of change alley, and the place hunting reptile of the court, to the illiterate legislator from the shop and the warehouse, to the low minded tavern waiter, and the prosperous shoe black; even to the perjured cheat who has stood in the pillory! ²—God grant me patience while stating wrongs so intolerable! but O curse not gracious heaven my country, with patience to endure

¹ Memoirs 143.—By referring to *Wyvill's Political papers* V. 1. I find among the deputies from the committees of several counties, cities and towns, for a redress of grievances, in the year 1780, the name of Lord *Althorpe*; as a deputy from *Buckinghamshire*; and that on the 20th. of March, when I, as a deputy from *Nottingham*, voted against an alteration in the *Representation of Parliament*, and for *shortening the duration* of parliaments, being recommended to the petitioning counties, to be made *articles of their associations*, his Lordship voted for that measure.

² The examples here alluded to are so well known, it is unnecessary to be more particular.

them! the constitution knows not of wrongs without remedies: and *England*, could she be conscious of such wrongs and not demand redress, would be fit only to crouch with other degraded nations, beneath the iron sceptre of a *Napoleon*! or could she, in speechless acquiescence, longer endure to behold the reins of her government in the hands of one, who, for the highest place in a system of corruption, wickedness and shame, basely bartered away the glory of standing foremost in the phalanx of patriotism and virtue, her degradation in character would be as deplorable as his own! no; reading the evil nature of the horrid system in her own grievous sufferings, and roused from her lethargy by the recent addition of insult to injury, she is preparing I trust to do herself right. Of the impossibility of her salvation, while robbed of her constitutional representation, damning were the proofs in the never to be forgotten divisions of the 8th. of April, and the 25th. of June. And equal demonstration did they afford, of *whom* Mr. *Pitt* is properly *the minister*, Whose voice did he on those occasions obey? Whose sentiments did he utter? Whose standard did he carry? Whose work did he do? The faction's! the faction's! the faction's!

"To govern," says *Bolingbroke*, "a society of free-
 "men by a constitution founded on the eternal principles of right reason, and directed to promote the
 "happiness of the whole, and of every individual, is
 "the noblest prerogative which can belong to humanity; and if man may be said without profaneness
 "to imitate God in any case, this is the case. But
 "sure I am, he imitates the devil, who is so far
 "from promoting the happiness of others, that he
 "makes his own happiness to consist in the misery of
 "others; who governs by no rule but that of his passions, whatever appearances he is forced sometimes
 "to put on; who endeavours to corrupt the innocent,
 "and to enslave the free; whose business is to seduce,
 "or betray; whose pleasure is to damn; and whose
 "triumph is to torment. Odious and execrable as
 "this character is, it is the character of every prince
 "or minister who makes use of his power to subvert,

" or even to weaken that constitution, which ought to
 " be the rule of his government. When such a prince
 " [or *minister*] presides with superior parts, Liberty is
 " in the utmost peril!"¹

Indignant emotions have I perceive caused me to digress from the point I had in hand. I was speaking of the *abuses* and the *acts of parliaments* by which, in addition to the decay and present debility of boroughs once more robust, the constitutional use and intention of the commons house of parliament is utterly destroyed. That house might indeed remain in *FORM* even though *England* were become a province of the *French* empire, or had sunk beneath the despotism of a native prince, as the senate of *Rome* retained its *FORM* under her *Neros* and *Caligulas*; but its *CONSTITUTIONAL use and intention have been long gone*. It was a conviction of this fact that produced the patriotic exertions which commenced in 1776, and extended themselves, as I have shewn, all over the kingdom for a *Reform in our representation*: but necessary as was that reform to freedom and the public welfare, and certain as are the constitutional principles on which the necessity rests, it is not to be regarded as a matter of surprise, that the first efforts should have failed. It would have been more surprizing had they succeeded, considering how profound an ignorance on the subject, *the deplorable effects of lost rights*, then pervaded the nation, even to its highest ranks; considering also what packs of literary hounds were kept in perpetual exercise for chasing far away from the borough inclosure "the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;" and what volunteer packs, in hopes of court feeding, joined the cry; and considering again that the anti-reforming factions had in their hands the whole patronage of the crown, and the whole revenue of the kingdom, and could at their pleasure make that revenue just what they pleased, for extending influence, for making traitors, for rewarding apostates, and even, if their cause required it, for spreading the flames of war to the four quarters of the globe.

¹ Diss. upon Parties, Ed. 1743, 112, the passage altered only by adding the word *minister*.

It was from a consideration of the magnitude of the undertaking, the difficulties attending it, the little assistance to be hoped for from the wealthy, and the length of time required to establish the triumph of truth supported by mere reason, over error supported by power, which induced the author, eight and twenty years ago, to recommend to our Reformers "patience," and to point out the necessity of "perseverance;" and even the probability that half a century of toil might be required, so far from being a reason for relaxation or an excuse for desertion, he ever held it to be a strong motive to unrelaxing exertion; especially as the public, if once in possession of the necessary knowledge, would then be prepared to avail themselves of any favourable opportunity which might meanwhile unlooked for arrive.

He at that time thought, as he still thinks, that between an official and a parliamentary reform there is an essential difference; that the partial mischief of an individual cloud may be gradually, silently and effectually drawn away from an *office* by the conducting wire of an ordinary statute; but that a great nation's *legislature*, like an entire atmosphere, when once overcharged with abuse and corruption, threatening the life of the state, can only be purified by an irresistible burst of national indignation, of the nature of the hurricane, which suddenly visits, and overwhelms, but quickly passes over, leaving the air, lately overcharged with pestilence and death, restored to its wonted salubrity.

The gust which lately obtained us the impeachment of a minister, was I trust the precursor of one sufficiently powerful for our purpose.

¹ Legislative right of the commonalty vindicated, 202. Published in 1777.

LETTER XVII.

MY LORD,

WITH regard to a house of commons that should be actually returned as we have supposed, could it, according to *constitutional intendment*, be any more a representative of the people of *England*, than it would be a representative of the people of *Indostan* or of *China*?¹ And that I may not be thought to speak improperly of a house of commons, I beg your Grace will keep in mind that in all popular bodies, whether we advert to their description, to their proceedings, or to their character, these necessarily take from a *majority* their denomination. If a *majority* of a corporation be presbyterians, it is called a *presbyterian corporation*: if the *majority* of a club vote the election or expulsion of a member, we say it is voted by the *club*: if the *majority* of the house of commons carry a censure or an impeachment, be that majority ever so small, it is the censure or the impeachment of the *house*; as a statute agreed upon by a *majority* of the two houses with the concurrence of the king is an *act of parliament*: so, therefore, if a bare *majority* of the house of commons had *not* been chosen by "those whom it appeared to represent,"² such house could not in strictness be a *commons house of parliament*, or the *commons in parliament assembled*, but in a constitutional argument would require a different denomination. And

¹ "This house might as well call itself the representation of France, as of the people of England." Sir G. Savile, 7th. May, 1782. "They held out their Boroughs to the best purchaser, and, in fact, they belonged more to the Nabob of Arcot, or the Rajah of Tanjore, than they did to the people of Great Britain; and it was a fact pretty well known, and generally understood, that the Nabob of Arcot had no less than seven or eight members in that house." Mr. Pitt, 7th. May, 1782.

² See the Journals of the house the 6th. of May, 1793, for a petition praying for a reform in parliament.

how strongly must this reasoning apply, if the supposed majority were as *two to one* ; and stronger and stronger still if it should be as *five to one*, *ten to one*, or *twenty to one* ! Such a house, as respecting the *people*, from a servant, must have become a master ; from a dutiful ministring child protecting its national parent, it must have become an oligarchy or a faction, as well as a scourge : as respecting, on the other hand, the *crown*, from a co-estate having a constitutional check over its acts, and a complete controul over its expenditure, it must have become a dependent, an obsequious client, meanly truckling for the wages of prostitution ; and a levyer from the people by taxation, of just such a revenue as the minister should demand ; nor to his demands would there be a trifling addition for gratifying *such a majority, and all their kindred and connections, in their families, and their boroughs, and among their agents and dependents*. The people, notwithstanding the necessary magnitude of national business, would not have the benefit of knowing when such a house was to meet, or when it was to separate ; and were it ever so defective in legislation, or in its guardianship of the public purse ; ever so oppressive in taxation, or ever so prompt in suspending the laws of personal security ; ever so forward in backing corrupt and despotic ministers in a system of terror for quashing parliamentary reform, or ever so backward in even censuring crimes of any of those ministers when brought to light ; ever so void of virtuous feelings in common with the nation, or so full of sympathy for placemen who had been guilty of that which was infamous ; the injured and insulted people would, as the law now stands, have no legal authority to shorten for one hour its septennial existence. But when the *CROWN* says to a house of commons,—come, it cometh ; go, it goeth ; or die, it dieth. And when dead and buried, how, and by whom, would it be re-placed ? **NOT BY THE PEOPLE !**

I will not, my Lord, add to this letter, with farther quotations from the admirable petition of the 6th. of May, 1793, to shew upon the authority of facts, which the petitioners prayed they might be allowed to prove at the bar, what is at present our system of represen-

tation and election; but as I can convey a very correct idea of it in fewer words, I will do so by putting a case. Suppose a company of bankers worth half a million of money, were now to take into the firm a lawyer or a lord, and in consideration of his having abilities for all work, and diligence equal to his abilities, should under hand and seal make him *sole acting manager*, and themselves all sleeping partners, without any power of change or removal; then suppose this acting manager were to obtain a law, that once in every seven years eight in ten of the cashiers, accountants, and clerks of the house should be elected; not by the said bankers, but by a score of what we call the *rotten boroughs*, in which those bankers were as little known or cared for, as so many *Chinese* mandarins; and that the election should not be made by taking a poll, but by a secret auction, in which the highest bidder should have the return; and that other clerks again should be appointed by other boroughs, where the said acting manager had absolute command; now let us suppose that Mr. A. T——r, in particular, having paid down his purchase money were elected cashier, and at the same time made private agent to the acting manager; that Mr. M. Sp——t was the person who purchased the place of accountant and broker; and Mr. G. G——y, the man who purchased that of bill receiver and negotiator; and also became a general indorser, “the better to conceal from the public eye the temporary necessity which occasioned the issue of” illegal bills.¹ Then again, let us suppose the acting manager to possess the power of granting to himself, and the rest, nominal and other offices, and as many of them as he pleased, with salaries to themselves for the use of their names, and other salaries to those who did the business; or perfect sinecures, either for life or for generation after generation; with pensions to their wives, and emoluments to their kindred; that in all the tradesmens’ bills much more was charged than furnished; that whole estates were paid for over again, which had been bought and paid for forty years before; and that all such powers were exercised without either de-

¹ See 11th. Report of the commissioners of Naval Inquiry, p. 504.

licacy or scruple, in utter contempt of any opinion of the matter the said bankers might entertain; and that the same modes of procedure would again take place at the end of every seven years: supposing I say all these things, what think you, my Lord, would be the future prospects of the said bankers? and how would the fraternity in *Lombard-street*, calculate or conjecture concerning their prosperity and their fate? When there are men paid to vindicate a real national case, of which this imaginary private case is no exaggeration, ought that "*interposition of the body of the people*," recommended by Mr. *Burke*, to be neglected for a single month, or week, or day? (See p. 66.) Let us now return to that *virtue* of the house of commons we were speaking of. Fits of *virtue*, are no novelties. We had them above twenty years ago. The house of that day supported Lord *North*, through thick and thin, sparing neither money nor blood, but giving him of both whatever he asked, until the *American* war had dishonoured, had burthened, had threatened with beggary, and had sickened; and until ministerial misconduct had angered the nation. When, in consequence of its anger, the minister began to totter, the house began to be *virtuous*; as he kept sinking, its *virtue* kept rising; and when the minister [against the nation's indignation,] could no longer stand, then the *virtue* of the house was at its height. After his fall, the *virtue* of the house like the dove of the ark, found for a while no rest for the sole of its foot, but went to and fro, until at last the waters of opposition were dried up and abated from off the land, and the lately floating ark of the heaven-born pilot firmly rested between the court and the borough pinnacles of the forked mountain of faction. Here the pilot of the ark, like another *Noah* with his dove, "*STAYED CERTAIN DAYS*," and then "*SENT FORTH*" the impatient *virtue*, which "*RETURNED NOT AGAIN*," nor was any more seen or heard of, for above twenty long years; that is, until another war more awful and threatening than the former, had again dishonoured, and beggared, and sickened; and until ministerial misconduct had again angered the nation. The devil, you know, must sometimes vote aright, to preserve his patent for doing evil.

But let us, my Lord, be grave. If wrongs the most intolerable, if calamity and shame can make men serious, serious ought we to be. Where was this parliamentary *virtue*, when the vices of vile factions and their vile agent, against every interest of the state, against the constitution of their own country, and the liberties of mankind, plunged us into the war? Where was this *virtue* when the house like a deaf adder refused to listen to the counsels of peace, clothed in the language of wisdom? Where was this *virtue*, while those who thus counselled were deserted, were treated with contempt, with calumny and insult, and disgusted even from attendance in a house, where the father of evil was even worshipped as a God, and suffered to trample on our laws and liberties with equal arrogance, audacity, and impunity?

Of the *virtue* of an assembly so constituted, let us then hear no more. To be truly virtuous it must act against the law of its nature. If its majority of great magnitude be appointed at the will and pleasure of the TREASURY, of PEERS, and other BOROUGH PROPRIETORS, and a large proportion also of its members, are servants receiving the wages of the CROWN, it is the creature of usurpation, begotten by injustice on corruption; and it will obey the evil will of its evil creator. There is but one really intrinsic and completely virtuous act of which such an assembly could be capable; that is, to annihilate its own cause of existence, so that, although sown in corruption, it might be raised in incorruption; although sown a factious body, it might be raised a constitutional body. Not indeed being a *Paul*, I certainly do not expect my preaching to work miracles of conversion; but yet, being strong in faith, I may contribute towards the existence or the increase of faith in others; and, like the sower that went forth to sow, may in my sphere be an instrument in carrying on this political husbandry, and promoting this work of regeneration; for seed must be sown before a harvest can be gathered.

Or, adopting the imagery of the fable of the *Phoenix*, whose youth and vigour is renewed by the very *flame* in which its age and decrepitude expire, let not the

moral be lost upon us. Applied to a popular political institution, it is singularly apt and beautiful. The imperfections incident to such an institution, like the unconcocted sap of hay too hastily put together, produce the *flame* by which it is consumed. We have recently seen state imperfections generating popular *flame*, and we have seen that *flame* in respect both of a particular case and object, and towards the reform also of official abuse, doing its *wholesome work of regeneration*.

LETTER XVIII.

MY LORD,

IN the constitution of a national government, a representative assembly is that master faculty whose action it is that gives health and vigour, and is the very life of life; and by whose re-action again obstructions are removed, diseases expelled, and even death itself set at defiance. In the constitutions of the *Greek* and *Roman* republics, it was the want of this faculty that prevented their ever attaining a settled order of government, which could be appealed to as a standard of rectitude; and when great corruptions and oligarchical diseases fell upon them, it was the want of this resuscitating principle which prevented their recovery; so that their distempers finding no remedy, they perished; as the constitution of *England* will as assuredly perish, whenever the commons house of parliament shall, without remedy, cease to be strictly representative of the people, and thereby lose its resuscitating principle.

Let therefore that house retain its whole proper nature, and the present popular *flame* against corruptions reach but that *Phoenix of the constitution*, and then all will soon be well. In the pure *flame* of constitutional

reformation, let all the usurpations, all the venality, all the mischiefs in the state, centring so conspicuously in that assembly, but once expire, from their ashes we soon shall see rise freedom, health, and vigour, in the splendour of exquisite beauty.

On this point the events now before us are full of instruction. They must teach the most incredulous and the most ignorant, to penetrate the true meaning of those politicians, not only in their own practice, but in condemning the practice of others, who closely imitate unprincipled quacks. These sons of effrontery and ignorance, who, in the last debilities of a putrid disease, order murdering evacuations, instead of cordial restoratives; assassinating phlebotomy, instead of re-animating wine; are the very prototypes of those whose counsels have brought our country to its present low condition, while they are ever exclaiming against the true state physicians, whether they write, or whether they speak; nay, even for seceding from parliamentary attendance, with being *inflammatory*. Mr. Fox is *inflammatory*: Sir Francis Burdett is *inflammatory*: even Mr. Whitbread, with all his caution and self-command, in the serious work of accusation, is *inflammatory*: I too, have had the honour of being classed among the *inflammatory*; but of all the *inflammatory* writers of our times, none have been equal to those *commissioners of naval inquiry*, whose *libels*, as they were called by Mr. Canning, set the whole nation, and half the house of commons in a *flame*; a *flame* which not even the utmost efforts of the two hundred and sixteen on the 8th. of April, nor those of the two hundred and twenty-nine, on the 25th. of June, with the mighty minister at their head could smother; and a *flame* which, I trust, not all the powers of corruption shall quench, until the political floor shall be thoroughly purged, until our liberties shall be laid safe in the garner, and the chaff of faction be burned with fire unquenchable.

After the present examples of what a *popular flame*, in contact with parliamentary corruption itself, is capable of effecting, can any intelligent parliamentary reformer despair? If the paltry iniquity of one man, have lighted up a *flame*, which nothing but his punish-

ment can extinguish ; do we not see how easily, by our union and energy, **THE BOROUGH** faction may be made to give up their usurpations? What are the mischiefs arising from the secret crimes of an individual office, compared with those that teem from that prolific mother of evil, which fills every department, every office of the state, with crime and abuse? When, in the first pitched battle between corruption and reformation, on the 8th of April, we perceive that *not a single placeman* in the house of commons, where so many of them have seats, *not an individual man, holding a public office, at the pleasure of the crown,* but made common cause with a corrupt official delinquent, and voted against *a mere acknowledgement of his crime,* is it possible to doubt of the close and intimate connection, between parliamentary and official corruption? or not to see that the former is the proper and prolific parent of the latter?

But indeed, what is the gang of placemen under the crown, having seats in a *Commons House* of Parliament, but in itself rank bribery, and foul corruption? And for what purpose, such an abomination and monstrous absurdity, but for the very object of generating corruption to the end, that the crown with parliament for its instrument may become perfectly despotic?

Mr. *Burke*, we know amongst his contradictory extravagances, was sometimes an advocate for *such* influence. At one time he could boast of, "extinguishing *secret* corruption, almost to the possibility of its existence; and of destroying direct and visible influence, equal to the offices of at least, *fifty members of parliament.*"¹ At another he is quite in love with their "visible influence." "It is not easy," says he, "to foresee, what the effect would be, of *disconnecting* with parliament, *the greatest part* of those who hold civil employments, and of such mighty and important bodies as the military and naval establishments. It were better, perhaps, that they should have a corrupt interest, in the forms of the constitution, than that they should have none at all."² What does the man mean, by talking of gentlemen having "*no in-*

¹ Speech 11 Feb. 1780. p. 87.

² Thoughts on the cause of the present discontents, p. 97.

Interest at all in the forms of the constitution," when they shall not have seats in the house of commons? A few pages before he had told us, "The house of commons, was supposed originally to be *no part* of the standing government of this country. It was considered as a *controul*, issuing *immediately* from the people. In this respect it was in the higher part of government; what *juries* are in the lower."¹—"The virtue, spirit, and essence of a house of commons, consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a controul *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency. It was designed as a controul *for* the people."² But yet, the jesuitical reconciler of contradictions, would have this "*jury*," packed and bribed, by the admission of servants, in the pay of the crown; this, "*image of the feelings of the nation*," taught the feelings of the court, and this *controul* of the crown, become its dependent !!! In page 67, we are told point blank,—"*It is not the derivation of the power of that house from the people, which makes it in a distinct sense their representative:*" But when we get to p. 69, our *Hibernian* orator tells us, that the proper, constitutional state of the house of commons, in relation to the people, is, "*an immediate state of procuration and delegation.*"

In so rich a mine as the writings of Mr. *Burke*, it is lamentable to detect, in union with his valuable ore, so large a proportion of the glittering spar of corrupt eloquence, employed to inculcate principles he knew to be wrong; such frequent alloys of the dross of faction, and such palpable nonsense, as must be apparent to those who take the trouble of bringing together and comparing his arguments. He himself, in explaining why other statesmen were not *reformers of office*, has, I doubt not, in a considerable degree, explained why he, who was so sensible of the corruptions in the house of commons, was not a *reformer of parliament*; when he says, "Gentlemen who are, with me, verging towards the decline of life, and are apt to form their idea of kings, from kings of former times, might

¹ Thoughts, &c. p. 66.

² Ibid. p. 67.

"dread the anger of a reigning prince ;—they who are
 "more provident of the future, or by being young are
 "more interested in it, might tremble at the resentment of a successor ; they might see a long, dull,
 "dreary, unvaried vista of despair and exclusion, for
 "half a century before them. This is no pleasant
 "prospect, at the outset of a political journey."¹ Our
 sagacious and crafty politician, while working his own
 way to power, on the merit of his very popular *econo-*
mical reform ; preserved himself we know, from *des-*
pair of court favours, by the "merit" of "baffling"
 others, and "preventing" their *parliamentary* reform.²

Mr. *Burke*, deep, and vast, and shining as were his
 parts, was not a truly wise or great man. Had his in-
 tegrity been equal to his talents, he might have be-
 stowed the most solid blessings on his country. His
 capacity as a statesman appeared in front, but there
 was always faction in the rear, from which he diverted
 attention by rich displays of eloquence. Had his colo-
 nial politics been sound, I incline to think he might
 have "baffled," even the faction behind the throne, and
 "prevented" the *American* war.³

I have incidentally, in the foregoing pages, exposed
 much of that inconsistency and contradiction, on the
 subject of a house of commons, which are never found
 where the head and the heart are faithful to each other ;
 and his want of integrity in that respect, were it neces-
 sary, might be set in a still stronger light. But let us
 endeavour to estimate at the same time his real charac-
 ter, and what we owe him. Every person who knows
 the state of parties at that time, must know the very
 powerful ascendant which the knowledge, the genius,
 the energetic temper, and indefatigable industry of Mr.
Burke, gave him in his party. Every man of expe-
 rience and observation must know, that when such an
 ascendant is employed with such men as the Marquis
 of *Rockingham*, and his political connections while in

1 Speech 11 Feb. 1780. 2 See p. 61.

3 See a letter to *E. Burke*, Esq. controverting the principles of
American government, laid down in his speech, on the 19th of April
 1774. Published by *Wilkie*, 1775. Afterwards bound together
 with " *American* independence."

power, for an adherence to fundamental principles of the constitution, and for urging reforms essential to the very existence of that constitution, that it must be sowing seed in good ground, to spring up and bear fruit an hundred-fold.¹ What then was the course of facts? In March 1782, Mr. *Burke*, went into office with Lord *Rockingham*: on the 7th of May following, the question of Parliamentary Reform, was moved by Mr. *Pitt*, and lost by *twenty* votes. Mr. *Burke* then paymaster-general of his majesty's forces, did not on that day attend in his place in parliament, making it even a *merit*, with the friends of Mr. *Pitt's* motion, that he abstained from opposing it. The next morning, the private secretary to Lord *Rockingham*, the Rev. *Walter King*, crossed a street to join me, and to express his concern at the issue of the debate of the preceding evening; and in the course of the conversation, to my great surprize, informed me, that Lord *Rockingham* unfortunately *forgot the day* appointed for the discussion, which had occasioned a defect in the attendance of his friends. Here, then, had Mr. *Burke's* influence with his party been uniformly exerted in favour of this reform; had his energy and industry, been regularly employed in watching over and promoting it, he himself would not have been absent from this debate; Lord *Rockingham*, would not have been allowed to forget the day; nor would there, as I presume, have been wanting *one and twenty* more votes, to have carried that question, now twenty three years ago.

While Lord *Rockingham* was at the head of *opposition*, his confidential friends and flappers were sufficiently active; they did not then allow him to forget the day of any great debate in the house of commons. On the 6th of April 1780, on the motion of Mr. *Dunning*, "That the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished," the *Rockingham* party, could then muster *two hundred and thirty four*; on the 17th, of February 1782, on the motion of General *Conway*, against continuing the war with

¹ Luke, 8. 8.

America, they could bring up *two hundred and thirty six*; and on the 15th of March 1782, on the motion of Sir *John Rous*, against confidence in ministers, they could produce again *two hundred and thirty six*; and Lord *North's* ministry, on the twelfth succeeding day, were out of office; but on the 7th of May following, when the nation was in the greatest joy at having got rid of the *North* ministry, when the tide of popularity was at its height, the borough faction in contempt, and the most important question to the people, that ever was, or ever can be agitated, was moved, the party of Lord *Rockingham*, his lordship then MINISTER, have but against them *one hundred and sixty one*, to oppose parliamentary reformation, and yet *they lose the question*, by a majority of TWENTY!!!

There can be no doubt that the *faction behind the throne*, and the *faction of the boroughs*, had on that occasion brought into the field their whole strength; which compared with that of the *Rockingham* party while in *opposition*, was absolute weakness; and yet it prevailed over that party when in possession of all the influence of the government, by *twenty* votes! Had therefore Mr. *Burke* been true to the constitution, and had as energetically employed his great talents to restore, as he did to undermine it, I have no doubt but that the liberties of our country, would at that time have been established on their right basis; that it would now have been at peace, and less in debt than it is, by *FIVE hundred millions*; and its situation with relation to *France* such, as to have called for, on a peace establishment, a less revenue by *two millions a year* at the least, than may be now expected, if the present war should ever cease. What, then, does the nation owe Mr. *Burke*?

But, it is time we had done with the weaknesses and vices of genius, to pursue our own steady course. Contrast, my Lord, all Mr. *Burke's* fine sounding nonsense, on the subject of representation, in his celebrated pamphlet, with any one plain *American* constitution; and contrast, also our case in *England*, with that of those who carried with them the *English* constitution across the *Atlantic*: we have a house of commons, in which

it would be a bold assertion to say, we have even ten men,—as many as would have saved Sodom from destruction—who, under a perfectly constitutional election, would have been the ten men that would have been chosen by the persons they are now supposed to represent ; whereas the *English Americans*, in nineteen houses of commons, representing a population of many millions, have not a *single member*, the spontaneity of whose election can be questioned, or so much as doubted : And again : We in *England* have a house of commons, which, in consequence of the usurpation of PRIVATE PROPRIETORS, PEERS, and the CROWN, has no pretensions to be a representation of the people ; and in which one fourth part of the whole or more are besides *placemen and dependents of the crown* ; whereas the nineteen *English American* houses of commons, are truly and completely, national representations by the spontaneity of free election ; and in all those representative assemblies put together, *there is not a single placeman, or person holding an office of honour or emolument, under the executive government.* Which nation is most free from the “domiciliary vexation,” of the “tax-gatherer?”¹ Which of the two countries is governed most for the benefit, and most to the content of the people ? And which of the two governments, can be most relied on, for the steady pursuit of wise national counsels, respecting treaties, or alliances with foreign powers ?

¹ See p. 13.

LETTER XIX.

MY LORD,

THE circumstances of the battle we have alluded to, will illustrate one of the fashionable doctrines, which so plentifully flow from a corrupted representation ; an evil that is not only a source of wrong, oppression, and

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insult in a thousand forms, but is equally a fruitful fountain of effrontery, of falsehood and folly. Unprincipled and shallow blockheads tell us, that a man elected by *particular* men, is the representative of *all* men, but subject to instructions from *no* men: he must forthwith be governed only by his own *judgment* and his own *conscience*. Yes! men shall break loose from all restraints of the constitution, of common sense, and common honesty, and yet prate about *conscience*!

Look back to the 8th of April last; leave the speaker in his chair, and you have then exactly one half of a very full house of commons, no less than TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN MEMBERS, voting, to be sure, according to *conscience*! But have we not heard of a conscience "seared with a hot iron?" Now although the vote alluded to was in direct opposition to the indignant sense and strong feelings of the nation, what is that to the TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN? Although representing, as they say, *all* the nation, they owe not their seats, as they know, to THE PEOPLE. Although as the nation thinks, this vote was for the obvious defeat of justice, what is that to the TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN? It is not public justice, but private interest, which is to govern them. They are to take care of the common cause, of the borough proprietors and patrons; and in so doing must exercise *their own judgment*.—Although, in the opinion of the nation, that vote was in direct breach of honesty, against *conscience*, and in defiance of decency, still what is that to the TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN? They and the nation have consciences cast in different moulds. Is this, my lord, to be endured? The despicable subterfuge for hiding the dishonesty of this vote, namely, that at once voting a censure on Lord *Melville*, upon the documents on their table, was not so proper as voting for a *select* committee, to ascertain that which was already ascertained and in proof before them, the public I believe alike know and despise. No: collected under their *Demetrius*, the craftsmen afraid for their craft, came forward in a body to brave the danger of public

1 See Appeal civil and military, on the constitution, p. 273.

infamy, and to bully the nation: their vote was the audacious vote of an unprincipled faction, whose enjoyments are the nation's misery, and whose prosperity its perpetual plunder; a vote given from fellowship with corruption, and a lively sympathy with guilt. All the subsequent efforts and the painful writhings of the faction, have added their testimony to the internal proof of the vote itself. Have we not since had by almost the whole of the very same men, with some addition of numbers, and on one and the same evening, one vote *against an impeachment*, and another *against a criminal prosecution*? Then again, when the latter question, in consequence of a slight schism in the faction, was, to the minister's surprize, carried by a trifling majority against him, the faction suddenly turn round, and the very men who voted *against* impeachment, *against* prosecution, *against* even censure, and who had uniformly argued, some of them, *against* Lord Melville's having committed any crime, and the rest that if he had, *his punishment had already exceeded his offence*:—these very men, I say, by as gross a trick as ever disgraced a sharper, come again by surprize upon the vindicators of the national honour, and before they can possibly get together, and make head against their sudden onset, vote away again that criminal prosecution, which had been the act of one of the fullest houses of commons, that has assembled within the memory of man, and THEMSELVES, in whose eyes Lord Melville, is an innocent or persecuted man, THEMSELVES, I say, move and vote his *impeachment*!—Have, indeed, the faction so acted?—Am I correct? or, has astonishment disturbed my intellects? Has the faction, with Mr. Pitt at its head, dared to do an act of three-fold enormity; being calculated at once, to bring an *English house of commons* into detestation, to libel *trial by jury*, and to libel likewise *trial by the house of lords*? These were once three boasted characteristics of the *English constitution*: how one of them has already suffered at the hands of the faction, to our grievous wrong and affliction, we but too well know: but, in respect of the other two, how stands the question? For a premeditated proceeding of such contradiction, and such vio-

lence, strong indeed must have been the motive, whatever that motive was. It must have been a motive felt at their very hearts. Nothing short of a fellow-feeling the most active, and a complete communion of interests, with the accused could impel them to such an act.

When it had been settled, after a debate of two days continuance, and when the house was uncommonly full; that the question of guilty, or not guilty, should be decided in a *trial by jury*, did the faction, by a reversal of that decision, mean to proclaim it to the nation, that, in their opinion, *twelve men upon their oaths* would have perjured themselves, in order to do injustice against an innocent man? If so, they grossly libelled *trial by jury*: or, influenced by the opinion of the attorney general, that, in a court of law, a conviction was inevitable,—an opinion certainly not, the child of his wishes—did they snatch the cause out of the court of king's bench, and remove it into the house of Lords, from a persuasion that they could there obtain a decision, the contrary of that which in a court of law, was inevitable? Did they indeed, mean to tell a nation, anxiously attentive to their proceedings, that a decision they despaired of from *twelve men upon their oath*, they trusted to obtain from *two hundred and fifty men, upon their honour*! If this be the true construction of their vote, can there be a stronger libel on the house of lords? And the farther you carry the comparison, stronger and stronger becomes the libel. After a long life of ministerial patronage, and the scattering of obligations in every direction, if *personal* enemies to Lord Melville in the mass of society could be supposed, three parts in four of the pannel would be still open to his lordship's *challenge*, on a *trial by jury*, for removing all possibility of a reasonable objection, to that mode of trial: whereas, in the mode now resorted to, although *the whole bench of twenty six bishops*, as I believe, and *above one hundred of the other lords*,¹ owe their seats in the house,

1 Mr. Fox, on the 27th May 1797, said, "I have looked to the machinations of the present minister in that way, and I find that, including the number of additional titles, the Right Honourable gentleman has made no fewer than *one hundred and fifteen peers*, in the course of his administration."

or elevations in rank, to Lord *Melville's* accomplice,¹ colleague, sworn friend, and patron, Mr. *Pitt*, and very many of them are under high personal obligations to the noble defendant himself, yet the plaintiffs in the cause, cannot now *challenge* a single person of those who are to try the issue between them. If, therefore, by the act of the faction, the nation have been made to believe, that the cause was snatched from a *trial by jury* and transferred to the *Lords*, from a persuasion that such favours must influence their decision, is not the house as a tribunal, scandalously libelled?

When the cause, after a long argument and a solemn vote, had been put into a regular and constitutional course, for a fair and unobjectionable trial, why a proceeding so *unnecessary* to justice? Why such a tricking and suspicious manœuvre? Why bring under suspicion the highest tribunal in the country? Why insinuate that the parliamentary judicature of *England* is no better than the parliamentary judicature of *France* had been under the monarchy, in which it was notorious, that the judges considered not who was right and who was wrong, but which of the parties had put in the strongest claim to their *gratitude*; always selling public justice for private gain, and paying their own personal debts, at the expence of those who were so unfortunate as to become suitors of their courts against the great and powerful.

But there is another view of the subject, tending to the same point of implied libel. We are, you know, familiar with statements, and with long lists of *PEERS*, shewing that a very considerable proportion of them actually appoint to their seats in the house of commons a very large proportion of *the Borough faction*;² and Mr. *Fox* tells us,³ that if the members so appointed do not implicitly obey the instructions of those who so appoint them, they are not considered as gentlemen. In this view of the case, then, is not the nation taught to consider a great body of the peerage, as real authors and prompters of the measure, as, in effect thus instructing *their* representatives:—‘ Lord *Melville* is our friend; and as nothing else can save

¹ See p. 34. ² See the *journals of the commons*, for 6th. May, 1793.

³ See a future page near at hand.

‘ him, you must at all events, remove his cause into our court, where we shall do what we can to favour his escape.’ Those, I say, who either by words or actions, cause such things to be suspected, do in effect slander and libel in a very unseemly manner, the house of lords, in the persons of a large proportion of its members. But whatever may be the political errors, or human infirmities, hanging about any of the members of that house of parliament, it is, my Lord, my decided opinion, and I solemnly declare it upon my honour as a gentleman, that on trying the impeachment of lord *Melville*, their judgment, whatever it may be, will sustain to the full the high reputation of their tribunal, and prove completely satisfactory to the nation: and I moreover believe that that judgment, whenever it comes, will not raise the reputation of the faction in the house of commons, who have acted as we have seen.

But, my Lord, such ever have been, and ever must be, the proceedings of parliaments raised upon the ruins of the nation’s liberty. Even so early as in the reign of king *William*, in consequence of parliament having obtained only a *three years continuance*, and of the success of the court in preventing an exclusion of placemen, we find it said of such corruption, “ ’Tis this that has changed the very natures of *Englishmen*, and of valliant made them cowards; of eloquent, dumb; and of honest men, villains: it is this can make a whole house of commons eat their own words, and *countervote* what they had just before resolved on: it is this could summon the mercenary members from all quarters of the town in an instant to *vote their fellow criminals innocent*.” — “ By these means they made their numbers and interest in the house so great, that no miscarriages in the government could ever be redressed, nor the meanest tool belonging to them punished: some of which they did indeed *take into their own hands*, which raised in the people a high expectation that some extraordinary penalties would be inflicted upon them; when their design at the same time was nothing else than to protect and screen them from the ordinary course of

" *justice*. Such is now the difference, in point of corruption, between a common jury and *the grand jury of the nation!* such a mutual assistance and support have they been to one another in the several mismanagements of their trusts !"

I trust, my Lord, the nation is not in a temper to view with apathy these proceedings. If it can submit to these things, and longer endure the usurpations of a *Borough faction*, it is a nation fit only to furnish places, and pensions, and pillage to the unprincipled and avaricious! and if, after Mr *Pitt's* black share in the transactions reported by the Commissioners of Naval inquiry, and the part he has acted in the proceedings we have spoken of, it can tamely bear the continuance of his ministry, it is a nation that ought to forget it ever produced *Russells* and *Sidneys* and *Hampdens*; and to blush at the very mention of freedom or public spirit! no, my Lord these things and these men cannot be forgotten. Flesh and blood can but bear to a certain point. We are on the eve, I trust of this man's utter expulsion from a power he has most criminally misused, never more to contaminate by his vices the counsels of his sovereign; never more to exert his "*influence as a minister*," to rivet on the neck of the nation the yoke of a plundering faction; never more to possess the power of plunging again the dagger of an apostate into the bosom of the constitution: and we are on the eve of the day, I also trust, when the nation shall pass its irreversible sentence of extinction; on that claim to a right of voting without responsibility, which has been followed up by actually voting against the rights, the justice, the indignant feelings, the honour, and the unanimous and known judgment of the nation. The nation and the faction are now at issue: there is no medium. We must again my Lord, assemble in our counties, and our towns; and let it be seen whether the faction shall master the nation, or the nation master the faction.

¹ *The danger of MERCENARY PARLIAMENTS: with a preface showing the infinite mischiefs of LONG and PACKED PARLIAMENTS.* p. 9, 13. Edition of 1722, but written in or before 1702.

LETTER XX.

MY LORD,

BUT it is said, that many of the *two hundred and sixteen*, and many of the *two hundred and twenty nine*, although they voted according to *their own judgment*, and *their own conscience*, yet voted against *their own opinions*, frequently declared in private company. How is this? Is not here a contradiction in terms? An absurdity? What then! still it is just as it should be, that is, it *naturally* grows out of a system which is nothing else but contradiction, absurdity, and wickedness; the system, by which such non-entities as *Midhurst*, *Gatton*, and *Old Sarum* give actual, operative legislators to the land; legislators who are at any time ready to enact, that they had, have, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the people of *England*, as once they bound the people of *America*, in all cases whatsoever, that especially of TAXATION. Amongst the other absurdities of the system, are those respecting *instructions from constituents*. It is the language of the law, the constitution, and common sense, that representatives, who are attorneys, stewards, vicarious deputed persons, acting *for* others who have elected them *so to do*, are bound to obey instructions, provided only the instructions be not contrary to the moral law, or impossible of execution. But a certain shop-keeper who thinks himself more learned than the law, and more wise than the constitution, together with many others, treats the doctrine of instructions with insolent contempt both in theory and practice; that is to say, all instructions given by the people for their own benefit or self-defence: but then there are in this admirable system another sort of instructions which are to be implicitly obeyed. "When gentlemen," says

Mr. Fox, "represent populous towns and *cities*, then " it is disputable whether they ought to obey their " voice, or follow the dictates of their own conscience; " but if they happen to represent a noble Lord, or a " noble Duke, then it becomes no longer a matter of " doubt; he is not considered as a man of honour who " does not implicitly obey the orders of his single constituent. He is to have no conscience, no liberty, " no discretion of his own; he is sent here by my Lord " this, or the Duke of that, and if he does not obey " the instructions that he receives, he is not to be considered as a man of honour and a gentleman. Is a " gentleman to be permitted, without dishonour, to act " in opposition to the sentiments of the city of *London*, " of the city of *Westminster*, or of *Bristol*; but if " he dare to disagree with the Duke, or Lord, or Baronet, whose representative he is, that he must be " considered as unfit for the society of men of honour? This is the chicane of tyranny and corruption, and this, at the same time, is called representation. In a very great degree the county members are held in the same sort of thralldom; a number of Peers possess an overweaning interest in the " county, and a gentleman is no longer permitted to " hold his situation, than as he acts agreeably to the " dictates of those powerful families." Under what instructions the votes of the *two hundred and sixteen*, and the *two hundred and twenty-nine* were given, the nation, no doubt, have taken into their serious consideration; as I trust will be seen in the next popular meetings.

What then, my Lord, remains to be done? Shall we now speak, or for ever hold our peace? Shall we now act, or for ever remain a passive prey, to men who claim a right to have their hands for ever in our pockets, because forsooth they have purchased *Gattons* and *Old Sarums*? Shall we behold our countrymen the dupes of such reformers as a *North*, a *Burke*, a *Pitt*, and a *Dundas*, (now Lord *Melville*,) or advise them to take counsel of the CONSTITUTION, and their own understandings? If the duty of common defence be universal, it is yours, my Lord; it is mine, it is every

man's alike. Who, then, when he hears the trampling of the foe, or sees his embattled phalanx, waits for *example* to stand forth? Or who, when the foe is in the field, and his neighbours are asleep, leaves them to be slain, or made captive, instead of breaking their fatal slumber, and calling them to their post? Stand forth then, men of *England*, in defence of your rights, your liberties, and your property! Do ye claim a right to the enjoyment of *political liberty*? Men conversant with the science of civil government aver that, under your present circumstances, it does not in *England* exist. Claim ye a right to a genuine efficient *representation in parliament*? Be assured, ye have it not. *Taxation*, indeed, ye have in reality; but *representation* only "in forms, in types, and shadows, and "fictions of law."¹

But if *representation* be gone, and with it *liberty*, perhaps ye are content with being masters of your *property*? Alas! here again ye are equally deceived; for THOSE WHO ARE ONCE MASTERS OF A COUNTRY'S LIBERTY, ARE FROM THAT MOMENT MASTERS OF ITS PROPERTY ALSO!

Stand forth then, I say, men of *England*, to discuss these high questions! On these questions it depends whether, "in the majestic sense of the word,"² ye have, or ye have not, a COUNTRY; that which was the COUNTRY of your fathers; that which ye ought to leave as a COUNTRY to your children.

What is POLITICAL LIBERTY? The *political liberty* of a nation, is its power of *self-government*. A nation can only be *self-governed*, when its laws are made by the people, either *personally* in a public assembly, (only practicable in very small states) or by *representatives* freely and fairly chosen. The *political liberty* of a citizen in a state governed by *representation*, is not a mere *personal* but a *social* right and condition; and, to be perfect, the following requisites are essential; 1st. He must be a member of a *self-governed* nation: 2d. He must enjoy, free from controul or persecution,

¹ *Burke's Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents*, p. 82.

² Sir William Jones, in a private letter to the Author.

a fair share in electing the national representatives; and 3dly. His right of election must *not* be subject to unjust *denial*, or unjust *suspension*; for if there be a power which can *suspend* the exercise of my elective right for *three* years, or for *seven* years, the same power may *suspend* it for seven times seven, or for ever; so that a power of *suspending*, is a power of *denying*: and what is that, but a power of *enslaving*?

What is REPRESENTATION? It is that concentrated essence of the English constitution, it is that portable extract of liberty, which the deputies of a nation carry with them into a legislative assembly, and by which they express the nation's will in the enactment of its laws. Genuine REPRESENTATION is therefore the life, the energy, the majesty of national freedom. When *Englishmen* were first driven by persecution into the wildernesses of *America*, this constitutional essence, this extract of liberty, was the heavenly manna of a weary pilgrimage; and continues to this moment that food of political life, which has raised and nourished them into a great people, free and flourishing, and which is rapidly spreading human liberty and human enjoyment over an immense continent.

What is PROPERTY? It is the absolute command over our substance that constitutes PROPERTY. It must be ours, and ours only, to give or to withhold, to grant or to refuse, either to our neighbour or to the crown, or it is not secure. If it can be rightly taken from us, even by "the supreme power, without our consent, we have in it no property at all; for truly I have no property in that which another can *by right* take from me when he pleases without my consent."¹ If he have such right, the substance is *his* property, not mine.²

What then, is the result? Do we not see how connected, how interwoven, how inseparable, are *political liberty*, *legislative representation*, and *property*? If liberty be impaired, property is endangered; and when liberty is gone, property is no more. That day once

¹ *Locke on Gov. c. v. 21.*

² Letter to electors of Nottingham, p. 23.

come, (and unless prevented by exertion, it is not far distant,) our wealthy merchants will be to a modern court, what the *Jews* were to our kings six hundred years ago; that is, money-sponges to be squeezed at pleasure; and they may then expect to be addressed in the laconic stile of the *Prussian Frederick*, to a *Jew at Berlin*;—"A MILLION OR A HALTER!" Even you, my Lord, a Duke of *Bedford*, with your eighty, or your hundred thousand pounds a year, should popular representation be annihilated past recovery, might, as you well know, at any moment be clapped in the tower, and every atom of your estates be swept away by a confiscation. When *Richard* the second, says *Rapin*, had got "a parliament at his devotion," made up of men who "had promised to be subservient to his designs," it "made no scruple to sacrifice to the passions of the king and his ministers, the most distinguished lords of the kingdom, as well as the liberties and privileges of the people." The Archbishop of *Canterbury*, contrary to law and justice, was quickly banished, "and his estate confiscated to the king's use." The Earls of *Arundel* and *Warwick*, were as illegally condemned, the one to death, the other to banishment; and the Duke of *Glocester*, without any form of trial, was strangled; *all their estates being confiscated to the king.*¹ Let Mr. *Pitt* and the *borough faction*, but go on as they have done, till legislative representation be lost past recovery, and then these scenes and worse may be acted again.

Stand forth then, I say, men of *England*, to avert from yourselves and your posterity the evils, the misery, the degradation, and shame, that inevitably follow a loss of liberty!

In your counties and in your towns immediately assemble. The discussion of all that is necessary to your well-being, may be brought within the narrowest compass. We have seen, that PROPERTY depends upon LIBERTY: we have also seen, that the LIBERTY of a great nation depends upon its LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION. Here then, fix your attention! This

¹ *Rapin*, I. p. 468.

is the right for which alone ye need to contend. Secure this, on the true principles of the constitution, and you then secure every thing. But I may be told, that my observations are not new ; that my prescription is only a repetition of what I have given before. What then ? As the beneficence of God has furnished no other specific, no other medicine capable of curing our state disease, it would only be to play the imposture, were I to propose any other. Political alteratives in such a case, require to be long and patiently administered ; the foundation of a cure may be laid, when little amendment appears to the uninstructed eye ; and it is only by perseverance in the right course, that health can be restored. The cure may at last appear to come suddenly ; when, in fact, the individual step by which we arrive at it, shall only be the last of ten thousand, equally necessary for bringing us to that point.

But if, for recovering our liberty, and preserving our property, a restoration of our constitution be *necessary*, a removal of Mr. Pitt's ministry is, to say the least, *fit and proper*. While contending for a parliamentary reformation, we cannot be satisfied that an apostate to that cause, who, as events have taught us to believe, sold himself to *the faction behind the throne*, and *the faction of the boroughs* for ministerial power, which power he has uniformly employed against the people and *to strengthen those factions*, should retain in his hands the immense patronage of the crown. If we wish for the external prosperity and honour of our country, we must deprecate the longer continuance of the executive government in hands which experience has shewn to be unequal to the task. If we wish our government to rest on the salutary basis of popular respect, and public opinion, it is absolutely necessary it should no longer be contaminated by the presence of a man, who, by the unaccountable complacency of that house of commons which we want to reform, was allowed to escape impeachment, after having been privy to, and conniving at, the misapplication of public money, and therewith "*accommodating*" TWO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, *Boyd and Benfield*. I might speak in plainer *English* ; for if a sum of forty

thousand pounds be, in the first place *to be illegally* diverted from its parliamentary destination by a minister; if that money be then to be *clandestinely* lent to *two members of parliament* (who always voted with the minister,) and *without interest*; if such *secrecy* be to hang over this dark transaction that not any other member of the cabinet (except his accomplice lord *Melville*) is to know it, and that *no document* of this loan is to be preserved, *no memorandum* of it to be any where entered; and if when the business after a lapse of eight years is accidentally *detected*, the sole apology is a flimsy, absurd, and therefore insulting pretext of *state necessity*, which every man's common sense must reject with scorn, but which is also *falsified by irresistible testimony*, independent of the internal evidence of *this circumstance*, that the minister himself, when the proper time arrived for reporting what he had done, and the necessity of doing it, (if such a necessity had existed,) and asking for his indemnity, was *altogether silent*; if I say, such is the case, they who please may use *Bardolph's* word, "*accomodated*;" and they who please may express the fact in still plainer *English*: and when the delinquency of an accomplice, gross in its form and infamous in its nature, has found an apologist, an advocate, a partizan, and a protecting patron in this presiding minister, every gentleman, every Englishman, that would not share in the disgrace, owes it to his own character to join in addressing the King, to make known to him the dishonour which has fallen upon his government and upon the nation; and to pray that he will wipe out the stain by a removal of this disgraced minister, and of every colleague who has not revolted at acts of such turpitude.

How different the feelings of that minister, (in whose *private* sympathies are lost all sense of the duty of office, of the dignity of station, of the purity of character, as well as of the nation's disgust,) from the feelings of magistrates I could name, who would not sit down on the same bench with rotten borough members of parliament, their brethren, after these in their estimation had forfeited the characters of gentlemen, by voting on the 8th of April, against Mr. *Whitbread's*

motion of censure, on Lord *Melville*! Or from the feelings of mercantile members of parliament,—not opposition men—who to the writer's knowledge declared, that had they not voted with Mr. *Whitbread*, they could not have shewn their faces upon the Royal Exchange! And how the declaration of Mr. *Byng*, at the Middlesex county meeting, on the 2d of May, drew from his auditors a burst of applause, your grace will recollect: “If I could have taken a different part, from that which it is my pride to have espoused, I should have thought myself unworthy of being your representative, or of being respected in society; and should have expected to have been shunned by all men of independent minds. I do not look upon the defenders of Lord *Melville*, as less guilty than himself.”

LETTER XXI.

MY LORD,

BEFORE we altogether take our leave of Messrs. *Boyd* and *Benfield*, it may gratify our readers to have it brought to their recollection, or to be informed that the instance lately brought to light, was not the first in which a friendly intercourse between the minister and one of these gentlemen, had been made conspicuous; for Mr. *Burke*, in his speech on the motion made for certain papers relative to *India*, delivered on the 28th Feb. 1785, gives us the following information. “Our wonderful minister, as you all know, formed a new plan, a plan *insigne recens alio indictum ore*; a plan for supporting the freedom of our constitution by court intrigues, and for removing its corruptions by *Indian* delinquency. To carry this bold para-

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"doxical design into execution, sufficient funds and
 "apt instruments became necessary. You are per-
 "fectly sensible that a parliamentary reform occupies
 "his thoughts day and night, as an essential member
 "in this extraordinary project. In his anxious re-
 "searches upon this subject, natural instinct, as well
 "as sound policy, would direct his eyes, and settle his
 "choice on *Paul Benfield*. *Paul Benfield* is the grand
 "parliamentary reformer, the reformer to whom the
 "whole choir of reformers bow, and to whom even the
 "right honourable gentleman himself must yield the
 "palm."—"Mr. *Benfield* has thrown in the borough
 "of *Cricklade*, to reinforce the county representation.¹
 "Not content with this, in order to station a steady
 "phalanx for all future reforms, this public-spirited
 "usurer, amidst his charitable toils for the relief of
 "*India*, did not forget the poor rotten constitution of
 "his native country. For her, he did not disdain to
 "stoop to the trade of a wholesale upholsterer for this
 "house, to furnish it, not with the faded tapestry
 "figures of antiquated merit, such as decorate and may
 "reproach some other houses, but with real, solid,
 "living patterns of true modern virtue. *Paul Benfield*
 "made, (reckoning himself,) no fewer than eight
 "members in the last parliament. What copious
 "streams of pure blood must he not have transfused
 "into the veins of the present!"—"Mr. *Benfield* was
 "no sooner elected than he set off for *Madras*. It
 "was therefore impossible for the minister, to consult
 "personally with this great man. What then was he
 "to do? Through a sagacity that never failed him in
 "these pursuits, he found out in Mr. *Benfield's* repre-
 "sentative, his exact resemblance. A specific attrac-
 "tion, by which he gravitates towards all such charac-
 "ters, soon brought our minister into a close connec-
 "tion with Mr. *Benfield's* agent and attorney; that is,
 "with the grand character, (whom I name to honour)
 "Mr. *Richard Atkinson*, a name that will be well re-

¹ As a punishment for the corruption of this borough, a part of
 the county was united to it, for the purposes of returning members
 to parliament.

" membered as long as the records of this house, as
 " long as the records of the British treasury, as long as
 " the monumental debt of *England* shall endure. This
 " gentleman, Sir, acts as attorney for Mr. *Paul Ben-*
 " *field*. Every one who hears me, is well acquainted
 " with the sacred friendship, and the steady mutual at-
 " tachment that subsists between him and the present
 " minister. As many members as chose to attend in
 " the first session of this parliament, can best tell their
 " own feelings at the scenes which were then acted.
 " How much that honourable gentleman was consul-
 " ted in the original frame and fabric of the bill, com-
 " monly called Mr. *Pitt's India* bill, is matter only of
 " conjecture; though by no means difficult to divine.
 " But the public was an indignant witness, of the osten-
 " tation with which that measure was made his own;
 " &c. &c. The reformation may be estimated, by
 " seeing who was the reformer. *Paul Benfield's* as-
 " sociate and agent, was held up to the world, as the le-
 " gislator of *Indostan*. But it was necessary to authenti-
 " cate the coalition, between the men of intrigue in
 " *India*, and the minister of intrigue in *England*, by a
 " studied display of the power of this their connecting
 " link. Every trust, every honour, every distinction,
 " was to be heaped upon him. He was at once made
 " a director of the *India Company*; made an alderman
 " of *London*; and to be made, if ministry could pre-
 " vail, (and I am sorry to say how near, how very near
 " they were prevailing,) representative of the capital of
 " this kingdom. But to secure his services against all
 " risk, he was brought in for a ministerial borough. On
 " his part, he was not wanting in zeal for the common
 " cause. His advertisements shew his motives, and the
 " merits upon which he stood. For your minister,
 " this worn-out veteran, submitted to enter into the
 " dusty field of the *London* contest; and you all re-
 " member, that in the same virtuous cause, he submit-
 " ted to keep a sort of public office or counting house, where
 " the whole business of the last general election was ma-
 " naged. It was openly managed by the direct agent
 " and attorney of *Benfield*. It was managed upon

“ *Indian principles, and for an Indian interest. This*
 “ *was the golden cup of abominations; this the chalice*
 “ *of the fornications of rapine, usury, and oppression;*
 “ *which was held out by the gorgeous eastern harlot;*
 “ *which so many of the people, so many of the nobles*
 “ *of this land, had drained to the very dregs. Do you*
 “ *think that no reckoning was to follow this lewd de-*
 “ *bauch? that no payment was to be demanded, for*
 “ *this riot of public drunkenness and national prostitu-*
 “ *tion? Here! you have it, here before you. The*
 “ *principal of the grand election manager, must be in-*
 “ *demnified; accordingly the claims of Benfield and*
 “ *his crew, must be put above all inquiry.*” — Again :
 “ *Thus, besides the arrears of three years, amounting*
 “ *to £106,500, (which as fast as received, may be*
 “ *legally lent out at 12 per cent,) Benfield has received*
 “ *by the ministerial grant before you, an annuity of*
 “ *£35,520 a year, charged on the public revenues. Our*
 “ *mirror of ministers of finance, did not think this*
 “ *enough for the services of such a friend as Benfield.*”
 Then, after additional statements, Mr. Burke proceeds.
 — “ *You must therefore, consider Benfield as some car*
 “ *security for £480,000 a year, which at 24 per cent*
 “ *(supposing him contented with that profit) will, with*
 “ *the interest of his old debt, produce an annual in-*
 “ *come of £149,520 a year.*

“ *Here is a specimen of the new and pure aristocracy*
 “ *created by the right honourable gentleman, as the*
 “ *support of the crown and constitution, against the*
 “ *old, corrupt, refractory, natural interests of this*
 “ *kingdom; and this is the grand counterpoise against*
 “ *all odious coalitions, of these interests. A single*
 “ *Benfield out-weighs them all; a criminal, who, long*
 “ *since ought to have fattened the region kites with his*
 “ *offal, is by his majesty’s ministers, enthroned in the*
 “ *government of a great kingdom, and enfeoffed with*
 “ *an estate, which in the comparison effaces the splen-*
 “ *dor of all the nobility of Europe.*” &c. &c. &c.
 Again : “ *It was long before any public account of*
 “ *this discovery at Madras,*” [One, on which he had
 said, “ *an universal indignation arose against the per-*
 “ *fidy of Mr. Benfield’s proceedings.*” &c.] “ *had ar-*

“ rived in *England*, that the present minister, and his
 “ board of controul, thought fit to determine on the
 “ debt of 1777. The recorded proceedings at this
 “ time, knew nothing of any debt to *Benfield*. There
 “ was his own testimony ; there was the testimony of
 “ the list ; there was the testimony of the Nabob of
 “ *Arcot* against it. Yet such was the ministers’ *feeling*
 “ *of the true secret of this transaction*, that they thought
 “ proper, in the teeth of all these testimonies, to give
 “ him licence to return to *Madras*. Here the minis-
 “ ters were under some embarrassment. Confounded
 “ between their resolution of rewarding the good ser-
 “ vices of *Benfield’s* friends and associates in *England*,
 “ and the shame of sending that notorious incendiary
 “ to the court of the Nabob of *Arcot*, to renew his in-
 “ trigues *against the British government*, at the time they
 “ authorized his return they forbid him, under the
 “ severest penalties, from any conversation with the
 “ Nabob, or his ministers ; that is, they forbid his com-
 “ munication with the very person on account of his
 “ dealings, with whom they permit his return to that
 “ city. To overtop this contradiction, there is not a
 “ word restraining him from the freest intercourse with
 “ the Nabob’s second son, the real author of all that
 “ is done in the *Nabob’s* name ; who, in conjunction
 “ with this very *Benfield*, has acquired an absolute do-
 “ minion over that unhappy man, is able to persuade
 “ him to put his signature to whatever paper they
 “ please, and often without any communication of their
 “ contents. This management was detailed to them
 “ at full length by Lord *Macartney*, and they cannot
 “ pretend ignorance of it.

“ I believe after this exposure of facts, no man can
 “ entertain a doubt of a collusion of ministers, with the
 “ corrupt interests of the delinquents in *India*. When-
 “ ever those in authority provide for the interest of any
 “ person, on the real but concealed state of his affairs,
 “ without regard to his avowed, public, and ostensible
 “ pretences, it must be presumed, that they are in con-
 “ federacy with him, because they act for him on the
 “ same fraudulent principles, on which he acts for
 “ himself. It is plain, that the ministers, were fully

" apprised of *Benfield's* real situation, which he had
 " used means to conceal, while concealment answered
 " his purposes. They were, or the person on whom
 " they relied, was of the cabinet council of *Benfield*,
 " in the very depth of all his mysteries. An honest ma-
 " gistrate compels men to abide by one story. An
 " equitable judge would not hear of the claim of a man,
 " who had himself thought proper to renounce it.
 " With such a judge his shuffling, and prevarication
 " would have damned his claims, but such a judge
 " never would have known, but in order to animadvert
 " upon, proceedings of that character.

" I have thus laid before you, Mr. Speaker, I think
 " with sufficient clearness, the connection of the mi-
 " nisters with Mr. *Atkinson*, at the *general election* ;
 " I have laid open to you, the connection of *Atkinson*
 " with *Benfield* ; I have shewn *Benfield's* employment
 " of his wealth, in creating a parliamentary interest, to
 " procure a ministerial protection ; I have set before
 " your eyes, his large concern in the debt, his practices
 " to hide that concern from the public eye, and the li-
 " beral protection which he has received from the minis-
 " ter. If this chain of circumstances do not lead you
 " necessarily to conclude, that the minister has paid to
 " the avarice of *Benfield*, the services done by *Ben-*
 " *field's* connections to his ambition, I do not know any
 " thing short of the confession of the party, that can
 " persuade you of his guilt. Clandestine and collusive
 " practice, can only be traced by combination and com-
 " parison of circumstances. To reject such combina-
 " tion, is to reject the only means of detecting fraud ; it
 " is indeed to give it a patent and free licence to cheat
 " with impunity."

LETTER XXII.

MY LORD,

THUS then we see that, between the minister and Mr. *Benfield*, political sympathies stimulating to the warmest reciprocation of services, had for many years subsisted; and Mr. *Boyd of Hamburgh*-memory, is well known to have possessed talents of singular congeniality with those of "the first financier in the world;" and to have aided that financier with those talents, by the fabrication of *fictitious bills*, with a view, no doubt, "to essential public interests;" besides which, the period of the loan having been that of a general election, and "the grand parliamentary reformer," Mr. *Benfield*, having had upon his hands at the time, an expensive contest, in which case any thing untoward in the case of that gentleman might, by a reforming statesman, have been considered as "a great public mischief;" taking all these matters duly into consideration, we cannot be surprized that the friend of *Boyd* and *Benfield*, should wish to "accommodate" them.

When indeed Mr. *Burke*, so early as 1785, spoke of "the son of *Chatham*," as even then plunging without scruple into the depths of *corruption*, such was the general persuasion of his "heaven-born" origin and purity, that no impression was then made on the public mind; and, for the same reason, as little regard was paid to Mr. *Burke's* charges of *state intrigues and faction*. We must not therefore be surprized that, when in 1790, the orator, by his celebrated "*Reflections on the revolution in France*," had thoroughly prepared the minds of the *English* aristocracy, for falling into the snares of the minister, while he was meditating war to ward off reform, he should have powerfully added to those prejudices and impositions on which the minister's power was founded, so as to make him the irresistible, omnipotent personage we remember him to have

been. But now that *time* and the *tenth report* have convinced us, that this man's origin was as earthly as that of any other politician's, and indeed that the clay of which he is made is none of the best, or purest; and when all the grievous and melancholy consequence of his anti-reforming war have been seen, and felt, and are still foreseen in dreadful anticipation, it is possible that a time is come, when our alarmists, who by their fatal error made themselves so instrumental to the mischiefs he has brought upon us, may give a patient hearing to a few expostulatory questions. I would therefore ask of them, 1st. If it was *inconsistent* with the good of the empire, that reforms in the decayed and corrupted representation of the people in parliament, and in the duration of parliaments, for which patriotic men had for many years contended, should then have been adopted and made law?

2d. Unless those reforms *shall* be so adopted and made law, is it possible that political liberty can, in this country, have any existence, or property any security?

3d. Had parliament, prior to the war of 1793, passed an act for the admission of all taxable householders to the elective franchise, for equalizing among them the national representation, for simplifying the elections, and for so protecting the voters as to secure a perfect freedom of election, and to have made parliaments annual, while at the same time it prevented expence; would not the government have still had in their hands the same law, with a sufficient army, a sufficient navy, and a sufficient revenue, for defending themselves, if necessary, against *Thomas Paine*? And would it not have been as feasible a project, as that of making a conquest of *France*?

4th. Had such a legislative reform taken place, filling the land with joy and gladness, establishing the liberties of *England* on the most solid base, and far eclipsing, in the eyes of all who understand the constitution, the glories of *Magna Charta* and the *Bill of Rights*, would any soul have regarded either the sense, or the nonsense of *Thomas Paine*? or would he

himself ever have thought of circulating a single pamphlet in this country?

5th. And, in a *pecuniary point of view*, would it not have been as much to the credit of "the first financier in the world," to have promoted such a reform, which with but decent management in ministers, would have enabled us to have discharged in a dozen or fifteen years, the whole national debt then subsisting; as to have rushed into a war for the very purpose of preventing such a reform; a war that has already made that debt between *six and seven hundred millions*?

6th. Let our alarmists, I say, lay their hands on their hearts, and as honest men answer these few questions. Will Mr. *Windham*? Will Lord *Grenville*? Will Lord *Spencer*? Will any man pretending a knowledge of, and a regard for our constitution, *now* argue against a reform in our representation? Will these, or any men *now* tell the nation it ought not to have such means of self-defence against despotism in its ministers, or corruption in its parliaments? These I have named, (and I name them for no unfriendly purpose) are practised statesmen; but if not yet convinced of the necessity of *this* reformation in the state, they have been statesmen to little purpose, and are beyond the reach of even experience itself in conferring wisdom. If they are to this moment ignorant of the vital principle of the *English* constitution, they cannot be qualified for an *English* cabinet. Is it possible that they should *know* the principle, and yet *not respect it*? Is it possible they could act a part which should effectually disentitle them to any respect from an *English* people?

From the steadiness, however, with which these persons have resisted all the attempts for re-uniting them once more in a cabinet with Mr. *Pitt* and apostacy, corruption and treachery, we must hope they have not only ceased to think with that political impostor, but have likewise seen their own errors; those errors which hurried them from the virtuous and peaceful courses of constitutional reformation, into a frantic war against the liberties of their country and of mankind: we must hope that visiting recollections since their retirement, will have rendered them incapable of

ever lending their names to a revival of the stale and shameless imposture, of mere official economy for the purpose of "*baffling*" that reform which can alone redress the grievances of a much and long suffering nation : we must hope they will not repeat the insulting trash, of the *security*, the *perpetual operation*, the *stability*, the *eternity*, and the *impossibility of failure* in a mere regulation of those offices which are the pipes that empty the exchequer, while the pipes that empty the pockets of the people into that ever-yawning gulf, are left to run with a perpetually increasing stream!

I have intentionally called by name upon Earl *Spencer*, Lord *Grenville*, and Mr. *Windham*, because the nation has had cause to mark in these ex-ministers, a long course of ardent and active hostility to the CONSTITUTION ; an hostility which has in no small degree, if they in council were of any weight, brought our country into its present situation. The people of *England* have a strong claim to know from these persons, apparently desirous of returning to official situations, if they have "turned them from their evil way."¹ Do they, or do any of them, deny that REPRESENTATION, as in this work explained, is the CONSTITUTION? If on this question they are willing to enter the lists, there will be no want of combatants.

Although a child in prowess to that champion who, against the monster despotism, once took up the "defence of the people of *England*;"² yet, putting on "the armour of *Albion*,"³ which, in a political view, is "the armour of light,"⁴ even I, the humblest knight in the service of that peerless *English* princess, sweet Liberty, hesitate not to throw down the gauntlet; and to proclaim through the regions of chivalry, that my mistress is the most fair, most chaste, most lovely of all the princely daughters of *Europe*; and that her proper, characteristic attire, and which alone can display her heavenly form to advantage; or preserve her charms to immortality, is the transparent robe of *representation*, which, playfully as it flows, changes its vivid hues, as changes the ever-varying face of heaven. If the valo-

¹ Jer. 23, 24.

² Milton.

³ Trident, 52.

⁴ Rom. 13, 12.

rous *Windham* and his companions, or any other discourteous knights, dare gainsay what I advance, let them come on, spear in hand. Whether the adverse knights shall be three, or three hundred, or three thousand, is matter of indifference. If truth be on my side, my antagonists must be overthrown. But, all gaiety apart, I am seriously of opinion, my Lord, that, after the part these statesmen so long acted, when colleagues of Mr. *Pitt*, and Lord *Melville*, it is not enough that they should coolly become candidates again for power, without explanation; but that they owe it to their country, as gentlemen, as men of honour and probity, in this awful crisis of her affairs, explicitly to declare themselves on this great question, on which her very existence depends.

What imports it indeed that the expenditure of office be accounted for to a farthing, if that expenditure may be just what it shall please a faction, who do not desire that it should be a farthing less than can be extorted from the people by such a financier as Mr. *Pitt*? What imports it that the offices should be as pure as snow, if parliament should be as corrupt as putrid carrion? What imports it that the scratches of private peculation, and the petty wounds of official abuse, be ever so oft bound up by such plastering reforms as Mr *Burke's*, if kings and ministers are to be under no constitutional controul, but may when they please tear open the bleeding arteries of war and profusion? What combination of such reforms could have prevented either of the two destructive and treasure-wasting wars of the present reign, which have been waged against the constitution, and the liberties, and the purses of the nation.

Had we wanted proof of the mockery of reforming the offices with a view to œconomy while parliament remains unreformed, we have it in the *Atholl* job; which, for its rapkness, and for the indecency of bringing it forward at the moment the whole nation was

1. See p. 63 and Mr. *Burke's* Thoughts on the cause of the present discontents, p. 57. 1770.

2 See his speech on œconomy, p. 90. 1780.

complaining of the waste of public money, and its having been driven through both houses of parliament as it were in defiance of public opinion, while its author was under impeachment for other jobs, exceeds every thing we could have imagined possible, even to the effrontery of a *Melville* or the audacity of a *Pitt*. Parliament indeed, imposed on by the factions, having passed a statute in favour of the grant applied for, that statute must now be treated with respect; but we may still complain of its injustice, and pray its repeal. Nor are we precluded from noticing the conduct of individuals, or of factions concerned in obtaining the law. From the best sources of information, we are warranted in believing it to be a fact, that the *Atholl* rights in the Isle of *Man* were sold to the public, and fully paid for "on or before 1st. June 1765," at which time the sum of £70,000 was given for the same. It is so stated in 5th. Geo: III. c. 26. being "An act for carrying into execution a CONTRACT made, pursuant to the act of parliament of the 12th. of his late majesty *George* the first,¹ between the commissioners of his Majesty's treasury and the Duke and Dutchess of *Atholl* the proprietors of the isle of *Man*, and their trustees, for the purchase of the said Island and its dependencies, under certain exceptions therein particularly mentioned." Those exceptions in favour of the *Atholl* family are the patronage of two bishopricks, and of every ecclesiastical benefice or promotion; all manorial rights, and rights of soil, and private property of every kind, expressed in a very long and particular enumeration; the same to be holden of the king by honorary service, of rendering two falcons at every coronation, and a yearly rent of £101. 15. 11.

Here then is a "CONTRACT," into which the family certainly were not hurried, nor by the terms of which were taken by surprize, for they had it seems, deliberated for forty years, that is, from 1725, to 1765, before they finally contracted; which then was done with the most precise enumeration of particulars, calculated to a penny, ratified by an act of parliament, and now

¹ Chap. 28, passed in 1725.

of forty years standing. If such an agreement is not to be conclusive and binding, what is? It certainly has not been any *compliment* to the purity and independence of parliament, that the family have at various periods *attempted* to obtain by court favour, a farther sum of money for what was so sold, and so paid for. Never however before the ministry of Mr. Pitt as it should seem, was the purity and independence of *parliament* in this particular put to the test; for every privy council, every prime minister, and every crown lawyer, to whom application or reference had been made, on the pretence of a claim to a farther remuneration, had without exception rejected such claim as wholly void of foundation, from the administration of Mr. Grenville down to that of Mr. Addington inclusive.

But what signifies a receipt in full of all demands of forty years standing? What signifies an act of parliament in ratification and evidence of a contract? What signifies the uniform decisions of privy councils ever since the first sale and payment grounded on the opinions of all the law officers, chief justices and chancellors that had ever been consulted, in the eyes of that virtuous oeconomist of the public treasure, Mr. Pitt, when a scotch friend of Lord Melville asks for a hundred thousand English guineas,¹ and when the grant has the recommendation in form of *that* noble Lord, of Mr. William Dundas, and two or three others, forming a committee of privy council !!!²

In the debate on this extraordinary measure, Lord Sidmouth, speaking of the memorial presented when he was at the head of the treasury, said the law officers reported that they saw *no grounds* in support of the claim, and that in this report the privy council concurred. "Such," says he "was the situation of things when a *change of administration* took place. After that change, the former *resolution* of the privy council was altered, and a new one substituted in its room, admitting the claims of the noble duke to be founded in justice." Lord Ellenborough, chief jus-

¹ The annuity would sell for that sum.

² See Morning Chron. 15 July, 1805.

tice of the king's bench, said, " my lords, never did I
 " witness a job come into parliament in a way more
 " gross and palpable than the present. In a few days
 " parliament will disperse, and I hope we shall not re-
 " turn to our homes with the stigma of having passed
 " such a bill as that now before us; that we shall not
 " thus put an end to a session, during which less of
 " glorious and more of inglorious things have been ex-
 " hibited to the world; than during any former session
 " within the memory of man. Let us not, at a moment
 " like this, when all classes of the people are ground
 " down with taxes, add to their burthens by voting a
 " boon to *mendicant importunity*. However critical
 " may be the times: however great may be our dan-
 " gers, however hopeless the state of our finances;
 " let us not, my Lords, like sailors, when the vessel is
 " driving upon the rocks, abandon the sails, throw up
 " the helm, and fall to plundering the chests. Let us
 " rather, my Lords, by virtuous deeds, endeavour to
 " resist the storm, and to avert the vengeance, that
 " seems ready to burst upon us. Let us, at any rate,
 " for that is completely in our power, return to our
 " homes with the consciousness and the reputation of
 " *honest men*.

" For himself he would answer as a man and a gen-
 " tleman, that he knew nothing of the proceedings in
 " the privy council on this subject, *after a certain pe-*
 " *riod*, when one of the reports then on their lordship's
 " table was made by the board."—" He was as ig-
 " norant of the motives they proceeded on as the most
 " perfect stranger could be. It had been thought by
 " some, indeed to call this a job; he would say, if the
 " house will proceed with the precipitancy which
 " seems to be threatened, *they would commit as gross*
 " *and disgraceful an act as ever marked the worst of*
 " *times*." A moment before he is called upon to con-
 " sent to that stage of the bill in which it is his duty to
 " oppose the principle, if he thinks that wrong, a huge
 " folio volume is put into his hands, so reeking from
 " the press, that it is with danger to his health he can
 " hold it to read."

" He again besought their Lordships to pursue this harsh measure no further. He would even beseech the friends of the bill not to turn their lordships aside from doing their parliamentary duty in the gross manner now attempted. *The people of this country have a moral sense, and can strongly feel an indecent injury.*

To that moral feeling, then, of the people, when convened to seek redress of their grievances, let this "*boon to mendicant importunity,*" refused by so many cabinets and privy councils, and condemned by so many law authorities, but recommended by Lord Melville to Mr. Pitt and by Mr. Pitt to parliament, be submitted! a parliamentary gift so recommended, so circumstanced, and so timed, of *a hundred thousand guineas* to a friend of Lord Melville, may perhaps be as little relished as the ministerial loan of *forty thousand pounds* under as exceptionable circumstances to those friends of Mr. Pitt, Boyd and Benfield. It will no doubt seem somewhat strange to an English people, that such a money-grant of Lord Melville's recommending, should at such a moment be so much respected by a house of commons; nor will it appear less strange, that such a grant so originating, should be carried with as high a hand in the house of lords, as when this lord of the North had his forty proxies in his pocket. What conclusion can be drawn, but that, although out of the ministry, and out of the privy council, he is not out of power. This we certainly know, that the discoveries of the *tenth report* have not in any wise diminished his power over Mr. Pitt. To say the truth, those two statesmen were made for each other; and by what power soever they were joined together, none I hope will ever put them asunder; and that their union may be the more complete, it is to be hoped that the nation will energetically petition for the repeal of the two acts of parliament, by which their two aforesaid jobs have been sanctioned, and one of which grants them a common indemnity; so that when the loan job shall be fully understood, the two compeers may receive equal justice.

LETTER XXIII.

MY LORD,

IN pondering over a *state of the nation*, while those *principles of government which on his Majesty's accession sprang up near the throne*, are still in full force and vigour; we must not be surprized that many, even learned dignitaries of the church among the rest, have sought to recommend themselves at court, by the stupid impiety of attempting to write down the eternal principles of liberty inculcated by the immortal *Locke*. I had indeed thought of naming some of these gentlemen in a note; but considering how many lawyers and others had also made speeches against those principles, and the constitution, and how many also in this reign had even drawn their swords in the cause of despotism, I desisted from my intention; for were I to make out a catalogue of all, this single note would be longer than the rest of my book. And when men *by hundreds* say and do those things as *members of parliament*, which upon an inquest in a court of justice they would not say or do as *jurors*; nor in the transactions of private life could say or do as *gentlemen*; when abuse and pillage so inveterately pervade the executive offices, that according to Admiral *Markham*, one third part of our navy millions are swallowed by *peculation*; when discipline is undermined by evil example, and energy broken down by corruption; when fidelity gives place to a daring misapplication of public money, and œconomy to an unexampled profusion which, under a system so rotten is as unavoidable as it is deplorable; while detected delinquency, gross in its form, and infamous in its nature, finds, not an indignant prosecutor, but a conscience-stricken, servile protector, in a prime minister; shall the nation look on as an indifferent spectator?

To advert again to the *state of the nation* : when we look upon our national population, our agriculture, industry, art, and science ; when we take a view of our astonishing capacities for commerce ; when we think of our immense army, our resistless navy, and the widespread foreign dominions, teeming with wealth, dependent upon our power, what seems wanting to prosperity, to greatness, and to glory ? But when on the reverse we behold a peace expenditure beyond the rental of the whole land ; when we cannot wage war without more than doubling that expence, when we feel hanging at the neck of our industry, 'a mill-stone of between six and seven hundred millions of pounds sterling in weight ; when we see the vulnerability of our trade and plantations to a dextrous assailant ; when we contemplate a vigilant and vindictive enemy, with a population of more than sixty millions for his armies, and all the maritime means from the *Baltic* to the *Adriatic* for his navy ; and recollect the drain and dispersion of our military strength to keep our dependencies safe and subject ; while *the military branch of our constitution*, which is not only applicable to the perfect security of our own shores from even *insult*, but is the *true basis* also of an overflowing *disposeable force* for foreign services, is doubly betrayed ; that is, so far as left dormant, *criminally neglected* ; and so far as resorted to, *criminally perverted* : ¹ and while at the same time the marine of *France* is making its convalescent excursions across the *Atlantic*, as a healthful exercise and to recover its strength, keeping your whole navy on the alert ; and all her ports are preparing to pour at once upon you her numerous armies from a variety of points ; surely, my Lord, we have cause for deep consideration ! Surely we are not in a condition for alienating, by a denial of right and the grossest tyranny, a single *English* heart, or for relaxing, by injury and insult, a single *English* arm ! Nor was this surely a moment for the rulers of the land to have exhibited themselves to

¹ See England's *Ægis* : or the military energies of the empire. Published by Phillips.

an *English* people as a compacted faction in battle array, against the accusers of a state delinquent; while at the same time they are emasculating, and trampling on the constitution!

But with reference to the *state of the nation*, as opposed to the *state of France*, it seems prudent that we compare the capacities and talents of the two men who respectively preside over those countries and direct their energies. Equally hypocritical, intriguing, perfidious, and unfeeling, an unprincipled ambition sways the soul of both; a *Napolean* and a *Pitt* equally pay to the cause of human freedom the homage of words, and atab it in their deeds; one, without impoverishing, has beyond example aggrandized and strengthened; the other, without aggrandizing, has beyond example impoverished and weakened his country: ¹ one, grasps the widest combinations of state policy, directing with success all means to an individual end; the other, has attempted such combinations, and miserably failed; one, with all his vices and vanities, is the dread of *Europe*; the other, with all his pomp and importance, is her scorn: the one is no talker, but fills a throne with a silent energy that is felt by every cabinet and every people; the other, although an able maker of speeches, is wholly wanting in the deep energies of a statesman; and is known in other cabinets and nations, but as a subsidizing financier, and as the author of misfortunes; one is doubtless formed by nature to preside over a powerful nation whose government is despotic; the other is qualified to preside among commissioners for the affairs of taxes, but not in the councils of the king of a free people: one has great ability as a foreign negotiator; the talents of the other are for domestic intrigue and discord: the one possesses, even to a comparison with a *Cæsar* or an *Alexander*, the qualities of a warrior; the other makes acts of parliament to turn militia men into despoiseable soldiers, parish officers into recruiting serjeants, and sonorous speeches about such

¹ Strength and weakness are relative terms: in respect of *France*, every one must see how much by Mr. *Pitt's* war, *France* has been strengthened, and *England* weakened.

things; but as for the nature of war he knows nothing about it, and as for the conduct of war, he leaves that to *lawyer Dundass*, to a war *secretary*, or a *secretary*. at war, who sends his disposeable soldiers to be captured, or to be slain, or ingloriously to perish, by thousands and tens of thousands, in such expeditions as those to *Holland*, *Quiberon*, and *St. Domingo*; and who purchase misfortune and disgrace, with those millions he has wrung from wearied industry.

But if in real war he may not vie with the *Corsean*, in the warfare of domestic faction he is second to none. After suffering defeat at the hands of reformers, in two hard fought battles, and, from the cause of contest, defeat with moral infamy, no leader but himself would again have faced a victorious enemy; but, true to his wicked trust, and in a cause congenial with the temper of his soul, this chosen leader of the *faction behind the throne*, and the *faction of the boroughs*, shewed himself worthy of the choosers, worthy of the cause, for whom and for which he fought. Although forced in his intrenchments, and twice routed, twice he rallied and returned to the charge, while his too careless conquerors thought him subdued, snatching up, and waving high, the black banner of corruption, and crying to his myrmidons 'victory, or fatal reform,' with a victory he closed the parliamentary campaign: nor was he content with a victory without spoil: on the *Isle of Man* he proudly erected his trophy. But will the nation suffer to its reproach, this trophy to stand? Does it mean for the last time and for ever to bow its neck, and pass under the rotten borough yoke? Is it content to be led in triumph at the chariot wheels of a captain of *Coterelli*,¹ who ought himself to be led to the bar of national justice, as an impeached culprit?

As a *Middlesex* freeholder, I ask these questions of the Duke of *Bedford*! I ask them of the Dukes of

1 "The *Coterelli*, or banditti, who wandered over *Europe*, and offered their swords to the highest bidder, introduced the idea "that war might be considered as a trade." *Stewart's View of Society in Europe*, p. 128.

Norfolk, of Devon, of Northumberland! I ask them of Lord Dundas, and of every other freeholder who called, or who attended, our last county meeting! And as a native of *England*, I ask the same questions of every *Englishman* who is not content to read, that his country ONCE bred men who were renovators of a decayed constitution, and restorers of perishing liberties; and who desires to shew, that the race is not extinct! Has the political empiric, who has so abundantly poured out calamity and dishonour on the nation and its government, some *Circean* enchantment, to strike us dumb, and to bereave us of our reason? Has the juggler some all-quieting opiate, to tame us into the passiveness of cattle? Has he indeed some potent drug to transform us into a "swinish multitude," to lie groveling in our sty, or to be driven, or to be sold, or butchered, for the profit of the base factions he serves?

When the cause of freedom requires, there is, my Lord, a *Runnimead* in every county. Let *Englishmen*, then, shake off their indolence, and thither repair! Let them tell the *factions*, they are not yet deprived of reason; they are not yet become their cattle, or their swine; But, dropping all metaphor, if we would not be conscious of basely deserting the duty we owe our country, of giving a national sanction to the most wicked usurpation of our legislative rights, and tamely submitting to the most profligate abuse of power that ever insulted our feelings, we shall not be capable of suffering a whole autumn to pass away, without exercising our constitutional rights of assembling, addressing, petitioning, and remonstrating, for a substantial reform in our representation, and for a complete change of ministers. The *Ishmael* of our unhappy land has too long had his hand against every man's liberty, and against every man's property: it is time that every man's hand was against his continuance in power. For changing a ministry while the enemy was at the gate, he himself has set us the example. A change from bad to worse certainly wanted apology; but now to change from bad to better, affords a prospect of changing from danger to security, from war to peace, from ruin to prosperity; but at all events it must be a change from "*a disgraced ministry*," to one of fair reputation.

LETTER XXIV.

MY LORD,

IT is now universally felt that "this nation, with the best capacities for grandeur and happiness of any on the face of the earth;" (p. 21,) and furnished as she richly is with political sinews, latent energies, and innate courage, yet labours under some morbid affection by which her health is undermined and her strength paralysed. At home she is feverish, restless, and splenetic; abroad, she moves not in her wonted majesty, with vigour and authority. Her constitution impaired, a bad habit of the body politic has ensued: tumours have appeared, and quack plaisters have been applied; many call for more such quackery; while other babblers say, give us a new ministry; but mix it up so as to include the ability of all parties? Would to heaven we could see an end to folly and to faction? What! a mixed ministry, a hotch-potch of contraries! Honour and dishonour, patriotism and perfidy to be mixed together in the same cabinet! Whether in such a proposal there be more contempt of public feeling and opinion, more political depravity, or more want of sense, let others decide.

When a state is descending with rapidity from the heights of freedom, power, and glory, the drag-chain of a *parliamentary* opposition is rightly applied; but when attempting to recover the lost elevation, to re climb the steep ascent, to regain by painful effort the mountain's top, what man in his right mind would then clap on the drag-chain of a *cabinet* opposition? What honest man would then clog the political wheels with anti-constitutional doctrines, apostacy, and treachery? What man of sense will give his voice for a mixed ministry, in which he cannot know whether the good or the evil shall preponderate? What man who respects

the constitution, desires to see again in power those who, during Mr. Pitt's most unconstitutional career, and his highest flights of despotism, were his colleagues and not reluctant coadjutors? Do such men again aspire to high offices in the state? Let them inform the people of their new claims to confidence, before they receive a popular suffrage in their favour! For past wrongs the people are easily appeased, when they have good grounds for expecting better treatment in future.

But the very idea of benefit from a good ministry, while the people have no representation in parliament, is folly and madness; for leave the commons house of parliament and the public purse in the hands of the *faction behind the throne*, and the *faction of the boroughs*, not a ministry of arch-angels could, under such circumstances, save the state, unless indeed there sat on the throne, an intelligent and determined reformer. But although, had we an honest minister, as well as an honest reforming king, they alone (because sure of the people,) would soon compel the factions to swallow the pill of reformation; it will not at present become the good sense of the people, to contend exclusively for that, which without an accompaniment of more potency than itself, can do them no good. I do not mean, my Lord, to discourage the idea of contending for a change of ministry; far from it: quite the contrary; that no man more than myself desires such a change, my book in every page bears witness; but then I desire we may not shew ourselves contemptibly ignorant, nor do our work by halves. A constitutional ministry, and a constitutional representation, are both necessary to us; we cannot dispense with either; but if we get the ministry, it cannot, unassisted by the people, get us the representation; whereas, if we get the representation, we are sure it will get us the ministry; besides, which of the two is most important we see also in this, that *constitutional representation* is only another phrase for *national liberty*; whereas, there is no such relationship between liberty and the best of ministries. These appear to me sound reasons why the people ought strenuously to contend for both objects at once; and thus

MORE SO, AS BY SO DOING EITHER OF THEM, INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED, WILL BE SOONER OBTAINED. It ought not, methinks, to recommend this factious, or at best foolish cant, against combining our efforts for a new ministry, with efforts for the still greater good, that it is precisely the cant which unfortunately prevailed against more manly reasoning in 1784, when the voice of the people raised to power the pledged champion of the cause, that very minister who first betrayed, and has since unceasingly laboured to enslave them.

On the nation's own conduct, in the meetings of the people at this crisis, will doubtless depend the treatment it will receive. The people, guided by the CONSTITUTION, will know how to respect, and how to be respected. To be attended to, they must pay attention to the situation of their country; and they must not be contented with thinking as others think, but they must follow good examples and act as others act; they must petition; they must address, for the petitioners and addressers can be numbered, but the mere thinkers, the dumb and inactive hoppers cannot. In reasoning with any branch of the legislature on grievances that are felt, on rights that cannot be denied, and on the sacred and paramount duties of justice, in language at once temperate and respectful, dignified and firm, they have nothing to fear, but every thing to expect; nothing to lose, but every thing to gain. Tyranny, whether factious or ministerial, is a coward and a bully. A divided and supine nation it insolently tramples on; but union and energy fill it with terror and dismay. Surely then every wise and good man will promote such meetings, and assist in such proceedings!

On the nation's own conduct, I repeat it, will wholly depend the treatment it will receive. Its grievances will be continued or redressed, as its conduct shall be weak or wise, supine or energetic. If it like not slavery it must crumble to dust the instruments of arbitrary power. If it relish not beggary and oppression, it must scatter to the winds the very elements of despotism: and this can only be done through the medium of a constitutional representation; and such a repre-

sentation can only be had, through the medium of constitutional meetings of the people in their towns, cities, and counties, from one end of the kingdom to the other.

But there are your mole-eyed politicians, by whose optic powers great objects are immeasurable, and who can contemplate but one small one at a time ; these politicians say, let us contend for the constitutional ministry *first* ; let us have *them* in power, and then from their wisdom and their purity, every thing may be hoped. Yes, to be sure, their *wisdom* and their *purity*, would be mighty recommendations to the factions, who are in possession of the citadel of the state ! Let me tell these under-ground gentlemen, who seem to think their enemies see no farther than themselves, that even such wisdom as would have kept *America* at the side of *England*, and placed them together in peace and glory, at the head of the civilized world, in the eye of grovelling faction seemed foolishness ; and such wisdom as would have warded off from the *French* revolution, its misfortunes and its crimes, and out of its fermentation, have extracted a balm to have healed the bruises of *Europe*, by the swinish taste of those grovellers, was rejected as gall and wormwood ; and as for *purity*, send it if you please to the stews and the brothels, to preach repentance : among the woe-worn victims of an amiable passion, it may find converts ; but the iron heart of avarice is stealed against relentings : in the seared conscience of the political prostitute, the purity of constitutional principle has no power of exciting a virtuous feeling ; not even can the electricity of heavenly eloquence, rouse to one generous vibration the callous nerve of base servility ! What ! have we no recollection ? Has any whig minister, during the last five and forty years who retained his principles, preserved his place ? Have virtue and purity raised any man to power, unless to be duped and betrayed ?

Those childish imaginations with which it is in vain to reason, we must catch if we can with parables and similitudes. Were a man of war's hull worm-eaten to a honey-comb, and the ingushing of the waters only prevented by a fraudulent plaistering of pitch, and by

keeping the ship in smooth water, would you enable that ship to circumnavigate the globe, encountering the fury of elements and the onset of enemies, by giving her a *new set of officers* without a *repaired bottom*? Or, had a sound ship fallen into the hands of pirates, to what end send her your best pilots? Would the pilots controul the crew, or the crew controul the pilots? And unless they themselves became pirates like the rest, would they not be again set on shore, or put in irons, or cast overboard?—No, no: We must cease the folly of sitting down with folded arms, and praying to *Jupiter* to get our cart out of the mire; but every man put his shoulder to the wheel, or pull before, or push behind; and then we shall succeed.

Too long has the body of the English nation been criminally passive, as to the hands in which the government of their country shall be placed. Too long has this much injured nation resembled a fertile plain, the subject of perpetual contest between *Tartar* tribes: Too long have alternate factions dealt out among themselves and partizans, the offices and the wealth of the state, as the successful *Tartars* divide the fruits, and luxuriant pasturage for which they draw the sword. It is time the nation, taught by its sufferings, became more rational, and exerted a better spirit, than thus to be preyed upon. Tis time it taught the proud sons of misused wealth, tis not a weight of rotten boroughs, but of solid personal and constitutional virtues, must be put into the scale of their pretensions, if their object be power; and that seats of legislation for *England* are to be obtained,—not by the merits of *polished stones in park walls*, of *painted posts in a meadow*, or of *toftsteads at the bottom of the sea*, but by knowledge, diligence in public business, and patriot virtue.

More than forty years long have we miserably wandered in the wilderness of faction and oppression, and if we mean to enter the promised land of the constitution, and to possess it, shall our *Joshua*, and a few captains alone go to the battle, to be given into the hands of the enemy? Nay; let the PEOPLE pass with them over *Jordan*, and then shall faint the hearts of these *Canaanites*, these sacrificers of their own posterity to *Mam-*

men and *Moloch*! Then shall there remain no more courage in these usurpers of our rights, these invaders of our liberties!

When we read of cannibals who eat alike their cattle, or their captives, or of the ancient *Canaanites*, who sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils, the mind revolts with disgust and horror; but trifling in fact has been the destruction of our species by such means, compared with that, by the carnage of war! What then is *unjust* war, with all its voracious harpies, but aggravated cannibalism, in which wicked men, instead of eating their prisoners, devour their countrymen? instead of giving to superstition a few individual victims, sacrifice to avarice and ambition, their own children, their kindred, their countrymen by hundreds of hecatombs, by tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands!

Against the voracious borough harpies of our own country, and against the *Northites*, the *Pittites*, the *Mcwillites*, and all the *Mammonites*, those cannibals of our own disastrous day, let then our disgust and indignation be turned! From the borough harpies we have lately heard much of "the long and faithful services" of a certain person now under a cloud, meaning I suppose his services to *them*; for he had his "full share" in Lord *North's* war, as well as in Mr. *Pitt's* war.

LETTER XXV.

MY LORD,

AS the court and borough LEGION, like that which once possessed the swine, may truly say, *we are many*, many I know will be offended at what I say; but it is because they are many, it is the more needful to speak. Let *England* but listen, the unclean spirits may rave! Let my country but raise its awful voice, they will be

cast out. That voice, in its very whisperings, has already struck torment and terror to the LEGION'S inmost soul! Not the factions' collected force, not all its tactics and artillery, not the voice of its charmer, nor the wonder working operations of his secret service enchantments; could save it from the calamity of two signal defeats, in which it was covered with wounds and with infamy. Deeply stricken, let the victors but follow up their blow; it shall no more rally. Crest-fallen, and smitten with a panic terror, the faction shall no where be more able to face the "*county power*," led on by patriot leaders; than Lord Castlereagh has been able to face them in *Downshire*. Let the counties then continue to assemble, and no respite be allowed the foe until a surrender at discretion lay the whole LEGION, at the feet of their injured country! and until the most evil of all the evil spirits shall not dare to offer other counsel to him, in whom resides the nation's executive majesty, than to put from him: "*a disgraced ministry*;" nor an Englishman shall be found at once so depraved and so daring, as to hold up an unclean hand against washing away the defilement of parliamentary corruption, and saving his country by means of A SUBSTANTIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE, IN THE COMMONS HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, AND PARLIAMENTS OF CONSTITUTIONAL DURATION.

Perhaps, my Lord, before closing my arguments in favour of such a reform, I cannot do better than bring together three very eminent men, meaning Doctor Franklin, Lord Chatham, and Mr. Burke. The venerable philosopher, "to whose ability and persevering virtue, the *American* states are principally indebted for their political salvation,"¹ says as follows:

1 *Wyvill's polit. pr.* III. 368. Where the Editor also says, "But highly as I esteem the wisdom of your opinion and advice, I place a still higher value on that philanthropy, which has induced you to bestow so much attention on this subject, in the midst of your many urgent avocations, when just on the point of leaving *Europe* to return to *America*. I consider this not only as a mark of your general benevolence, but as a proof that your peculiar good-will to *England*, lately our common country, has neither been diminished by any personal disgust, nor impaired by the hostilities of an unhappy civil war."

1. " No man or body of men in any nation, can
 " have a just right to any privilege or franchise not
 " common to the rest of the nation, without having
 " done the nation some service equivalent, for which
 " the franchise or privilege was the recompence or
 " consideration.

2. " No man or body of men, can be justly deprived
 " of a common right, but for some equivalent offence,
 " or injury done to the society, in which he enjoyed
 " such right.

3. " If a number of men are unjustly deprived of a
 " common right, and the same is given in addition to
 " the common right of another number, who have not
 " merited such addition, the injustice is double.

4. " Few, if any of the boroughs in *England*, ever
 " performed any *such* particular service to the nation,
 " entitling them to what they now claim as a privilege
 " in elections.

5. " Originally in *England*, when the king issued
 " his writs, calling upon counties, cities, and boroughs,
 " to depute persons who should meet him in a parlia-
 " ment, the intention was to obtain by that means
 " more perfect information of the general state of the
 " kingdom, its faculties, strength, and disposition, toge-
 " ther with the advice their accumulated wisdom might
 " afford him, in such arduous affairs of the realm, as he
 " had to propose : and he might reasonably hope,
 " that measures approved by the deputies in such an
 " assembly, would on their return home, be by them
 " well explained, and rendered agreeable to their con-
 " stituents and the nation in general.

6. " At that time being sent to parliament, was not
 " considered as being put into the way of preferment or
 " increase of fortune ; therefore no bribe was given to
 " obtain the appointment. The deputies were to be
 " paid wages by their constituents ; therefore, they
 " being obliged to send and pay, was considered rather
 " as a duty than as a privilege. At this day in *New*
 " *England*, many towns who may and ought to send
 " members to the assembly, sometimes neglect to do it ;
 " they are then summoned to answer for their neglect,
 " and fined if they cannot give a good excuse ; such as

“ some common misfortune, or some extraordinary public expence, which disabled them from affording conveniently the necessary wages : and the wages allowed being barely sufficient to defray the deputy’s expence, no solicitations are used to be chosen.

7. “ In *England*, as soon as the being sent to parliament, was found to be a step towards acquiring both honour and fortune, solicitations were practised, and, when they were insufficient, money was given. Both the ambitious and the *avaricious* became candidates. But to solicit the poor labourer for his vote, being humiliating to the proud man, and to pay for it hurting the lover of money, they, when they met, joined in an act¹ to diminish both those inconveniences by depriving the poor of the right of voting, which certainly they were not impowered to do by the Electors, their constitutents, the majority of whom were probably people of little property. The act was therefore not only unjust but *void*. These lower people were *immediately* afterwards oppressed by another act,² empowering the justices to fix the hire of day labourers, and their hours of work, and to send them to the house of correction, if they refused to work for such hire ; which was deposing them from their condition of free men, and making them literally slaves.

8. “ But this was taking from *many* freemen a *common right*, and confining it to a *few*. To give it back again to the many is a different operation. Of this the few have no just cause to complain, because they still retain the *common right* they always had, and they lose only the exclusive additional power, which they ought never to have had. And if they used it when they had it, as a means of obtaining money, they should in justice, were it practicable, be obliged to refund, and such money be distributed among

¹ 8. Hen. vi. c. 7.

² 8. Hen. vi. c. 8. being the very next statute : but the reference is not quite correct; for two years before, a similar act had passed, namely, 6. Hen. vi. c. 3. but probably it was to continue in force only until the next meeting of parliament, which was in the 8th year of the king, when it was *confirmed*. But statutes for regulating wages are older than that reign.

" those who had been so unjustly deprived of a right of voting, or forfeited to the public.

9. " Corporations therefore or boroughs, who from being originally called to send deputies to parliament, where it was considered merely as a duty and not as a particular privilege, and therefore was never purchased by any equivalent services to the public, continue to send now that by a change of times it affords them profit in bribes, or emoluments of various kinds, have in reality *no right* to such advantages, which are besides in effect prejudicial to the nation, some of those who buy, thinking they may also sell.

10. " They should therefore in justice be immediately deprived of such pretended right, and reduced to the condition of common freemen.

11. " But they are perhaps **TOO STRONG** and their interest too weighty to permit such justice to be done. And a regard for public good in those people influencing a voluntary resignation is not to be expected.

12. " If that be the case it may be necessary to submit to the power of present circumstances, passions and prejudices, and purchase, since we can do no better, their consent; as men, when they cannot otherwise recover property unjustly detained from them, advertise a reward to whoever will restore it, promising that no questions shall be asked."

" *Passy, June 16th. 1785.*"

Whether the Borough faction be, or be not, at this time "*too strong*" for the nation, that is, whether the nation be or be not, brought to its senses by the *two hundred and sixteen* and the *two hundred and twenty nine*, is now the sole question necessary to be decided. While the faction was "*too strong*," we know that *it would not* even **SELL** a single borough, but rejected, by a vote of *two hundred and forty eight* against *one hundred and seventy four*, the purchasing project of "the first financier in the world," when he "rose with hopes infinitely more sanguine than he ever felt before, and with hopes which he conceived to be rationally and solidly founded, to propose and to re-

"commend to the house the establishment of a *fund* for the purpose of *purchasing* the franchise of such boroughs as might be induced to accept of it."¹

When robbers, "*too strong*" for us seize us while asleep and rifle our house, we of course submit; and are even glad to get back the stolen goods by "*advertising a reward*;" but when the hue and cry has been raised, and the robbers with their booty are surrounded, we do not then "*purchase*" of THEM a restitution of our property.

Now, what says Lord Chatham? The present Earl of Buchan having asked his lordship—"But, Sir what will become of poor *England*, that doats on the imperfections of her pretended constitution?" He replied, 'my dear Lord, the gout will dispose of me soon enough to prevent me from feeling the consequences of this infatuation: but before the end of this century either the parliament will reform itself from within, or be reformed with a vengeance from without.'²

Mr. Burke's emphatic words are as follow: "Early reformations are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered enemy: early reformations are made in cool blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation. In that state of things the people behold in government nothing that is respectable. They see the abuse, and they will see nothing else—they fall into the temper of a furious populace provoked at the disorder of a *house of ill fame*; they never attempt to correct or regulate, they go to work by the shortest way—they abate the nuisance, they pull down the house."³—Let us, my Lord, pull down the faction, that the house may stand!

The public, my Lord, while reading this address, may ask—"But is not the duke of Bedford a *Borough*

¹ *Wyvill's Political* pa. II. 372, 389.

² Essay on the lives and writings of Fletcher and Thompson; by the Earl of Buchan, 215.

³ Speech, Feb. 11, 1780. On presenting a plan for the better security of the independence of parliament.

proprietor or patron? Does the author make no distinction? Are all equally a faction? All in equal enmity to virtue and their country? No: those among the possessors of such property or patronage (and the duke of *Bedford* is not the only one) who are nevertheless parliamentary reformers, are of the highest order of patriots. It is by quoting such instances we prove the age in which we live to have no small share of public virtue; for small is the virtue where there is no sacrifice. By holding up to a nation's imitation such examples, public virtue is increased and diffused: and when our cause has strenuous supporters in persons of high rank, of a deep interest in the preservation of property, order, and institutions; of exemplary morals, of useful lives, of sober minds and superior understandings, of a deep acquaintance with the constitution, and of hereditary *English* virtue; and whose closest intimacies and friendships lie amongst men distinguished for a love of liberty, as well as for political experience and wisdom; surely we shew that REFORMATION IS JUSTIFIED OF HER CHILDREN.

It is therefore with a satisfaction no words can express, it is said with the pride and exultation of an *Englishman* who truly loves and wishes to serve the country of *Russell* and *Sidney*, of *Hampden*, *Locke*, and *Milton*, that the writer can tell the people of *England* what the DUKE OF BEDFORD has told him: "I should be ashamed to give support to any set of men who did not feel the necessity of a radical amendment in the whole system of our government. The source of our evils is an inadequate, defective representation of the people in parliament, and until that source is cut off, in my humble judgment, abuse and corruption will never cease to flow in a thousand different channels. I hope and trust, the day is not far distant, when that most desirable event, a substantial and radical reform in the representation of the people may be brought to bear: in the mean time, let them see the extent of their grievances, let them know whence they arise, and let them coolly and dispassionately form their own judgments upon the best and surest remedy: it is at hand, simple, and

"of easy attainment." 1

Sincerely thankful, my Lord, for your obliging compliance with my request, that I might be permitted to put this declaration of your grace's sentiments into my book, sentiments which must be as gratifying to an *English* people, as they are worthy of an *English* nobleman, let me here add to your grace's testimony in favour of reformation, the well known aphorism of our immortal *Bacon*.

THAT TIME IS THE GREATEST INNOVATOR; AND IF TIME OF COURSE ALTER THINGS FOR THE WORSE, AND IF WISDOM AND COUNSEL SHALL NOT ALTER THEM FOR THE BETTER, WHAT SHALL BE THE END?

1 Extract of a letter dated the 29th. of April, 1805.

LETTER XXVI.

. MY LORD,

IN having, on occasion of the county meeting on the 2d. of May, consented, in deference to the opinions of persons highly to be respected, to postpone till another opportunity the motions I had prepared, for extending our ideas of reformation to the house of commons itself, I should not have been altogether satisfied, had I not since employed the time given up to postponement, in considering how that effort when a proper time arrived should be made with the best effect.

The result of that consideration I now submit to your grace and to the public, accompanied with the

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best counsel I have to offer, namely, to determine on forthwith calling together our countrymen in their cities and counties throughout the kingdom, to consult on this most important of all objects to *Englishmen*; but, under the circumstances of our case, to take the same opportunity of petitioning for a removal of ministers. To every intelligent mind I trust it will appear that these objects ought not now either to be severed, to please the "*buffers*," nor to be omitted, under the stale pretence of its embarrassing government in opposing our combined enemies, (which by the way are only a part of those with whom we had to contend when the ministry of Lord *North* was displaced; for then in addition to *France*, *Spain*, and *Holland*, we were at war also with *America*,) although this no doubt would be highly pleasing to ministers and factions whose continuance in power is the greatest of our dangers, and who, if they were not the worst of all our enemies, would resign that power they have so greatly abused; and in imitation of Mr. *Trotter* (when he pointed out to his successor in the pay-office how misapplications of the public money might in future be prevented) would recommend a correction of the very defect which they know by experience to have been the chief cause of all their own misgovernment.

From the frankness and true whig rectitude of your grace's own declaration on the most essential of the two points we have to consider, as well as from the identity there is between *misrule* in ministers and its *immediate cause*, I am well persuaded you will not disapprove of the two subjects, or, as I may say, these two branches of the same subject, being brought under discussion together, whereby each may the more strongly be enforced and the better illustrated. The very act of persons moving in the sphere of your grace would at once remove the fears of the honest but politically timid, and the doubts of superficial thinkers. These, how well meaning soever, do not always clearly see the propriety of a proposed measure, how constitutional, how correct, how essential soever, until the great and powerful of their party are in full career for carrying it into effect; but when these beckon, they

pour forth in strength, and shew that although diffident in counsel, they are energetic in action. You see, my Lord, the high responsibility attaching to eminence of situation and influence of character.

But I beseech you to beware of, and carefully to watch a species of politician, to whom it is very important to stand well with persons of your rank and political opinions. I allude to the *pretended whig*, for the breed is not extinct in the person of Mr. *Burke*. The *pretended whig*, is sometimes thrown into the party by accident; that is, from birth, as in modern cases that will readily occur to every mind; or from the reputation of talents, as in the case of the adventurer I have just named. Sometimes this accident proceeds from the weaker passions before they are overpowered by the stronger; and sometimes the *pretended whig*, wholly unprincipled, enters on a course of patriotism as the beaten path to power; or insidiously steals into the party, as a spy on public spirit, to betray its counsels, and to become a false guide whenever it can be done without detection.

Of this last species of *pretended whig*, could you see his heart, it is as pallid as the buff waistcoat he wears for a disguise; it glows not with one generous rosy drop of true *English* blood. Talk to him of a meeting for parliamentary reformation, he becomes profound in his air, he is solemn in his manner, mysterious in his words, and shakes his sagacious head; with a smooth affectation of sincerity, he hintingly, as if reluctant to damp your zeal, deals out his feigned doubts and apprehensions; and he insidiously praises, while he strives to defeat your virtue; he affects to dread the opposition of prejudice and to tremble at the consequences of a defeat. Although in all this he only hints and hesitates, and cautions, yet, artfully leading you to the ground of *French* revolutions, and *English* alarms, a crowded arena of combating opinions as favourable to dishonest ideas as a mob is to pick-pockets, here, thinking himself secure from detection, he launches out with less reserve and more fluency.

Basely affecting ignorance of the plain distinctions which shew the absurdity of arguing from the case of *France*, against preserving and fortifying the constitution of *England*, he is now no longer troubled with the modesty of doubt, or the timidity of hesitation, but is talkative and dogmatical; while his arguments, when scrutinized and brought to the test of either political science, or human experience, are as contemptible for their superficial froth and puerile nonsense, as all attempts to "*baffle*" parliamentary reformation, which is simply to "*ALTER THINGS TO THE BETTER,*" which "*THE GREAT INNOVATOR TIME HAS ALTERED TO THE WORSE,*" are diabolical for their wickedness.

What admirable reasoning it would be, that, because a *Frenchman* who had been stripped of nine tenths of his estate, had, by appealing to venal and profligate courts of *French* law, not only lost the remaining tenth, but got his throat cut for making the appeal, therefore, from thence forward for ever, no *Englishman* should appeal to an *English* court of law for the recovery of an estate of which he had been robbed by a treacherous guardian or trustee, although the inheritance were ever so valuable, and his proofs as clear as the sun!!!

Is there more sense or honesty, in quoting the miscarriage of the *French* REVOLUTION, as an argument against an *English* REFORMATION by an ACT OF PARLIAMENT? In *France*, besides the natural levity of the people, unfitting them for their enterprize, they had no *habits* of free men, no *knowledge*, no *precedents*; all which are so essential to the restoring and firmly establishing of national liberty: in *England*, every thing is the very reverse; the people are grave and persevering; their habits disqualify them for servitude, and impel them to the preservation of constitutional freedom; their knowledge directs their pursuit, and keeps them in the right course; and their whole history is made up of precedents of REFORMATION; they are literally countless; and every day of our lives, even while the great question of this particular reformation is *pendente lite*, we are adding to their number. Keep in mind, that the *French* object was a REVOLUTION; the *English* object is a REFORMATION by act of PARLIAMENT!

Observe likewise, the different *powers* to which the parties appeal! In *France*, the original appeal of the patriots was made to a *non entity*, that is, to an imaginary public opinion, where, from the nature of the government, and the fact of the case, a public opinion could not, and did not exist. So late as 1789, Mr. *Young* in his "*Travels*" says, "the backwardness of *France* is beyond credibility in every thing that pertains to intelligence. "From *Strasbourg* hither, [*Besancon*] I have not been able to see a newspaper. The whole town of "*Besancon* has not been able to afford me a sight of "the *Journal de Paris*, nor of any paper that gives a "detail of the transactions of the states; yet it is the "capital of a province, large as half a dozen *English* "counties, and containing 25000 souls." ¹ In *England*, for a real public opinion, we are pre-eminent; or, in the words of Mr. *Young*, for "the universal illumination of knowledge, acting by rapid intelligence on "minds prepared by habitual energy of reasoning to "receive, combine, and comprehend it." ² In *France*, the first fervours of a fickle character produced novel powers of their own creation; a legislature with more sail than ballast; a constitution, as new as the legislature; and a system of law, as new as all the rest. Here was no practice of past ages, no knowledge rooted in experience, no compass derived from the usages of their forefathers, no rudder of an authority rendered venerable and sacred, through time. Such were the powers on which their reliance was then placed. In *England*, on the contrary, our reliance is ON PARLIAMENT; awful for its antiquity, and venerable even to superstition; on a constitution, of still higher antiquity, and still more an object of superstitious veneration; and on a law, which is the gathered wisdom of ages, and is defined "the perfection of reason." We tread in the constant footsteps of wise and virtuous ancestors on like occasions; keeping always in sight the land marks of the constitution, and the maxims of our law. In *France*, when the shock of war and faction put the solidity of their new fabric to the test, its cement for want of age having acquired no adhesion, was unable

1 p. 146.

2 p. 147.

to keep the building together : in *England*, time has given the cement the adhesion of the material itself ; the public attachment and the constitution are equally war-proof and faction-proof ; as I trust will shortly once more appear : in *France*, the revolution finally sunk under a military despotism ; whereas in *England*, the fear of an inundating invasion having put arms into the hands of four hundred thousand free citizens, we are no longer under fear of a military government, but can yet resort to parliament, for the amendment of our representation ; as we are perpetually doing whenever we need the redress of a grievance, or an improvement in our condition ; and I desire to know what, except the personal interest of corrupt members, stands in the way of parliament redressing this, as well as any other grievance ; of making this, as well as any other improvement ? Is not unequal representation, as great a grievance as unequal taxation, which parliament has taken so much pains to redress ? Would not freedom of parliament, be as good a thing as freedom of trade, or a wet dock ? When parliament passed the three unconstitutional statutes to which in p. 141, I have referred, and opened its doors to the unconstitutional admission of a host of placemen and court dependents, which in abstract theory would have justified, if persevered in, the same national resistance as was experienced by *James* the second, or *Charles* the first, or other kings who violated liberty, did it even for any of these acts, so calculated to excite popular discontent, experience disobedience on the part of the people, or danger to the constitution from popular violence ? And are our deep-reasoning anti-reformers only afraid of an overthrow of the constitution, when parliament shall stem the tide of corruption and calamity which its own acts have let in upon us, and removed the discontents itself hath occasioned ? When it shall have repented of its own sins against us, when it shall have corrected its own errors, restored our liberty, and secured our property from the robbing hand of an untroubled minister, who, in God's name shall murmur ? If injustice and oppression, while they provoke resistance to ministers, cannot make *Englishmen* quarrel

with the constitution, shall justice and protection, shall experience of all the blessings of good government, obtained by walking in the paths of that constitution, adhering to its principles, and acting up to its spirit, produce such quarrel? "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib;" but the anti-reformer, more stupid than ox or ass, doth not know that justice is better than injustice, protection than oppression.

Heavenly truth, the very radiance of whose presence puts falsehood to shame and to flight, is not, my Lord, believe me, become a coward, fearing to encounter the squinting hag prejudice, although favoured by the fury of the most bigotted toryism of the jacobite school, the profligate effrontery of court venality, or the insidious hypocrisy of the *pretended whig*. Let us then, my Lord, honestly steer right onward in the cause of our country, without fear of arriving in due time at our desired haven. Our course is plain, and the compass of the constitution, allowing for the variation of the best practice from polar rectitude, and duly attending to the tides and currents of wayward humour we have to encounter in our track, will not fail to guide us aright. The idle fears of ignorance, will soon be dispelled by the calm courage of knowledge; and timidity, in seeking a redress of grievances will, by the sedate firmness of justice, be inspired with fortitude and resolution.

And is not the present state of the nation groaning under its burthens; fired with resentment and indignation against corruption and infamy; ruled by "a disgraced ministry," who are haunted with the fear of impeachment; freed, by its danger of invasion by a giant enemy, from the terrors of a domestic standing army, precisely that state, in which patriotism must want common sense, not to enter the field of discussion against the vile advocates for oppression and plunder; and must be blind and besotted, not to call upon the people for their exertions in all the peaceful ways of the constitution, with a determination not to desist until their grievances are redressed, and they shall have obtained a constitutional security against their return.

Why hesitate? Why waits John for James, or Charles for George, to take the first step when all

should be equally ready for the race? Why dream away, in disgraceful irresolution, a moment of precious time? Why wait till ministers by their vices, or their incapacity for conducting the war, add to our present calamities and dangers, others which we may avert by getting rid of them and their system? Men loaded with conscious guilt, and at their wit's end with the terrors of a dreadful personal responsibility for countless iniquities against the liberties of their country and its dearest interests, cannot have that calm self-possession of their faculties, now so necessary to ministers of *England*, beset as she is with difficulties and perils. In such a situation of a country, the want of a nation's confidence must be a sufficient objection, even to untried ministers of the most spotless reputation: but to ministers who once possessed such confidence to a boundless degree, and who have forfeited it by crimes and misconduct, the objection is a thousand times more forceful.

Why then do we hesitate? Have we any thing to fear? Do *the political enemy themselves* now seek the field of discussion, brand us with foul names, and brave us to the combat? Do the *Burgage-Tenure men* now call public meetings, to echo through the land *their feelings of happiness* "under the constitution, as by law established, and that they desire no alterations?"¹ Do the disciples of the secretary of the board of Agriculture now convene the men of *England*, to impart to them his valuable discoveries, that "the house of commons *never did* represent, and is *not responsible* to the people;" that "the members *give themselves* their powers and privileges; that unequal representation, rotten boroughs, long parliaments, extravagant courts, selfish ministers, and corrupt majori-

¹ See the laconic epistle from *Petersfield*, in 1782, in the *Wyoill papers*, II, 97. Eggeous as is the nonsense of a "constitution, as by law established," Mr. Pitt transcribed the language of the wise-*acres* of *Petersfield*, nearly word for word, into his sedition act, 36 G. III. c. 8. where we also read of the "constitution of this realm, as by law established." No man can mistake his meaning on that occasion; but, for the stupidity of the expression, see Appeal, civil and military on the constitution. p. 28.

"ties, are intimately interwoven with our *practical* " *freedom* ; and it would require better anatomists than " our modern reformers to shew, in fact, that we did " *not owe our liberty* to the identical evils which they " want to expunge?" Or do his patrons now desire county meetings, for appealing to the truth and successful operation of his doctrine, that " the prosperity " and happiness we have enjoyed for a century, *and* " *never so great as at present*, is owing precisely to the " house of commons NOT speaking the will of the " people?"¹

Do the *Reevites* now form loyal associations, for preserving to us the blessings of *such* a house of commons; or (that like a certain lord they may have, " two strings to their bow,") do they meet to assure their sovereign and his people, that " the constitution of England is a " *monarchy*," from which both " the lords and commons may be lopped off," and " cast into the fire," without destroying that constitution?² Will *oppression* now appeal to *the people*, in vindication of a system of *taxation without representation*, " as by law established;" or in proof of the wisdom and honesty of transporting reformers to *Botany Bay*, or of hanging them as traitors, because they did not change their politics with the minister? Or will *corruption* now assemble its votaries at a city tavern, to vote statutes to Mr. *Pitt*, or to Lord *Melville*? No: the anti-reformers have exhausted their stores of falsehood and effrontery, and emptied their magazines of calumny; the rotten boroughs are sick and silent; wary oppression bites his lips with inward mortification, and walks with fear and trembling; the stink of corruption is come up into the nostrils of the nation;³ and INQUIRY IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

1 Common wealth in danger, xlv, cxxiv, and Example of *France* a warning to *Britain*, 81, 90, 91, 94, 171.

2 See Thoughts on the Engl. gov. addressed to the *good sense* of the people. By *John Reeves*, Esq. commissioner of bankrupts, printer of the bible, &c. Would not an uncorrupt parliament have long since impeached the minister, who had been guilty of giving away the *money of the people*, in rewarding the writers of such doctrines as are referred to in this and the preceding note? But even this bears the proportion only of a molehill, to the mountain of the minister's treasons against the constitution!

3 " And I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils." Amos iv, 10.

To the patriot tempest, the enemies of our peace and freedom, bow their hated heads, in hope to survive, and then resume their sway : but that hope I hope is vain ; the tempest I trust will not cease, until it sweep away them and their pollutions !

Now then, when these ravagers of our country, dare not shew themselves in the open field, or shall shew themselves only to be chased before us as chaff before the wind, shall we be so wanting to ourselves and our posterity, shall we be such dupes to the *pretended whigs* who mix among us, as not to advance in full force to terminate the war, and secure the fruits of victory ? Shall we, by neglecting to secure our inheritance from the future inroads of these spoilers, invite the renewal of those inroads, and insure a predatory return, to take vengeance for having been once exposed to infamy and universal reprobation ? Shall we expose ourselves to a vindictive pillage, on the double policy of adding to their own strength, and increasing our weakness ? Instead of disarming them in our own defence, shall we leave them the irritated masters of our property and future fate, and provoke them to force iron ordinances, to be perpetually in force, as armour to their future despotism, and as barriers to our future resistance ?

When, ninecenturies ago, the last spark of *English freedom* seemed extinct, when ruthless barbarians had conquered and possessed the realm, when sovereignty itself had disappeared, and hovering despair, of horrid aspect and sable wing, darkened the dejected land, even then, the vigilance, the courage, the energy of one man recalled public spirit, inspired enthusiasm, restored liberty, and crowned his country with glory. What then forbids the patriotism of our day, under auspices the most favourable, to save the state ? Do not the *Alfreds* of our time know how to obtain the people's confidence and concurrence ? And what can resist a united people ? Can they be resisted by " a disgraced minister," and by his equally disgraced supporters ? By a profligate crew, damned in the public estimation, for their servility and prostitution ? Let our generalissimo, then, and his veteran lieutenants, now that the central war demands not for a season their presence, spread them-

selves around, to promote and watch over the county movements ; and let the honest and the ardent every where unfurl " the spirit stirring " banner of the constitution, and lead on to victory !

But I see the lazy and the lukewarm seeking in dreams and phantoms an apology for inaction ; and I hear them as ignorantly as ignobly descending on the peoples' *fears*.—The PEOPLES' fears !—THE PEOPLE HAVE NO FEARS, but of the farther accumulation of taxes and oppressions, of the continuance of the *borough* system, and the *Pitt* ministry. Away with these dreams and phantoms that haunt the imaginations of degenerate *Englishmen*?—What ! A reform that is to restore the sacred birth-right of REPRESENTATION, an object of *fear* !—The only means under heaven of preserving LIBERTY, an object of *fear* !—The sole security for PROPERTY, an object of *fear* !—Do the cotemporaries of a *Cornwallis*, a *Nelson*, a *St. Vincent*, at the call of *duty*, talk of *fear* ? Will the dread of shame and contempt, now silence the old snake in the grass, the *pretended Whig* ? Or will he still labour in his base vocation ? Should he now say, unless you can insure an universal and overpowering movement, stir not at all ; unless you call into action the great mass of the nation, you will do more harm than good ; the people you see are backward in the cause ; and until they shall generally petition for the reform more urgently than heretofore, you will be premature, and it will be prudent to lie quiet ; answers are ready. To a proposed resistance of *arms*, this counsel would be friendship ; to a resistance of *argument* and *opinion*, 'tis treachery. In this case, sleep and silence are insanity. Each additional day of acquiescence in usurpation, is an additional link in slavery's vile chain. Vicious ambition, in wars of the sword, as seems to be our danger in *India*, is oft weakened by success, and ruined by victory ; whereas, on the contrary, in wars of reason, while contending for constitutional rights, from the very warfare itself, independent of early success, we gather *Herculean* strength ; temporary defeats, arousing the powers of thought, and sympathies of feeling, infuse new vigour and animation, insuring to our perseverance final suc-

cess ; shall we argue, that, because a bow is unstrung and lies quiet in the armoury, it has therefore lost its elasticity ? Are we to pronounce it bad ; and unfit for use, because it does not string itself ? Where are they who have a right to reproach the *people* with backwardness ? And who shall find fault with those who ought to follow, because they do not lead ? Or, do we reason aright, when, in the cause of Liberty, and the high concerns of the constitution, we wait for the illiterate, to instruct the learned ; the tenant to push forward his lord ; or the private, to summon to the field of battle his general ? Of what value are experienced generals, powerful lords, or the learned, if not to watch while others sleep ; if not to mark even the distant appearance of public mischief, while undiscerned by the busy world ; if not, as it draws near, to give the alarm ; if not, when the constitution is endangered through deceitful counsels or treacherous acts, to defeat and expose the villany, to enlighten first, and then arouse the people in its defence ? Those who are by nature, by rank and fortune, the proper leaders of a people, must have ill employed their time, if, when despotism is in full march, they cannot, on the stamp of a foot, or the wave of a hand, call in an instant around them ten thousand patriots, as the vanguard of resistance.

Of the innate force and gratifying nature of the principle of parliamentary reformation, we may form some estimate, when we call back to our remembrance, the darkest period of the *Pitt* despotism, and recollect that even then, in the very midnight of that disgraceful season, in the year 1797, on the second of Mr. *Grey's* motions for reform, the minority's division, small as it was in comparison of better times, yet was by far the greatest division, that any question called forth in the house of commons of several years ; and when we compare the wretched speaking and nefarious voting of Mr. *Pitt* and his associates on that occasion, with the glorious flood of eloquence poured forth by Mr. *Fox*, we know what must be the triumph of the question, in every uninfluenced assembly of *Englishmen*. If when the nation, as though stupified by the potent spell of some necromancer, then lay prostrate at the feet of the ty-

rant, such was the power of this principle, what must now be its expansive force!

The patriot great, qualified for the pilotage of the state, have for some time past had their conferences. Naturally expecting, as the result of public meetings at this awful period, a national call to the helm, they doubtless, as was the case when the patriots of 1782, had similar consultations, have arranged in readiness, heads of constitutional points to be insisted on, in case their services should be demanded by their sovereign. On the occasion alluded to, the principal terms proposed to his majesty through Lord *Thurlow*, on which Lord *Rockingham* and his friends would engage in administration, were,

“ The independence of America: *no veto* ;

“ The contractors’ bill ;

“ The revenue officers’ bill ;

“ Mr. *Burke*’s bill, the great parts of it ; and

“ General peace, if to be had !

“ The Duke of *Richmond*, on seeing the conditions “ above mentioned, had observed, that no mention was “ made of A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT, and proposed, “ as an additional stipulation, that *the discussion* of that “ subject in parliament should be agreed to, which “ Lord *Rockingham* consented to ;” but when Mr. *Wyvill*, to whom that noble Lord communicated these particulars, asked if he might represent his Lordship as a general well-wisher to the cause of a parliamentary reformation, “ *he did not receive any clear and decisive answer.*”¹ This conversation it seems passed on the very day when, as I have already stated, Lord *Rockingham*’s private secretary informed me, of his Lordship’s having *forgotten* the day, when this great question was to be discussed ; namely, the day following that of the debate.

How much, (unfortunately for his country,) the ear of that virtuous nobleman, had been poisoned by the pernicious doctrines of a *pretended whig*, we see from the original form of the memorandum of terms, in which stood MR. BURKE’S BILL, but NO REFORM OF PARLIA-

¹ *Wyvill’s polit. pa.* III. 355.

MENT ! Other noblemen, who have lived to make a true estimate of the *Hibernian* reformation of that period, will take care, we trust, to shun the rock on which Lord *Rockingham* split ! How much of a piece at all times have been the palsyng counsels and the insipid patriotism of *pretended whigs* ! They were as busy in 1688, as in 1782 ; they deprived the political food provided at the revolution of the salt that would have kept it from putrefaction, to the end of time ; so that in less than seven years, it had a very ill savour ; in little more than twenty, rottenness had reached the bone ; and, before the end of the century, this boasted nutriment of *English* liberty, was dissolved into a mass of corruption.

“ The subjects which are protestants, may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions, and as allowed by law. The election of members of parliament ought to be free ; and for redress of all grievances, and for amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently !!!”
Nostrum of 1688.

“ The contractors’ bill ; the revenue officers’ bill ; Mr. *Burke’s* bill !!!”
Nostrum of 1782.

But as the state physicians of 1805 mean, I trust, to be either, “ a wise and virtuous administration,” or none at all ; and rather to sacrifice their own personal ambition, than to see “ *the liberty of the nation*,” sacrificed to the crown ; and as they know that “ *without a parliamentary reformation that liberty CANNOT be preserved, and the permanence of such an administration CANNOT be secured ;*” so we may confidently assure ourselves, that the first article of their conditions of serving, and a *sine qua non* of holding the reins of the executive government, will be A REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.

An agreement to “ *the discussion*,” is NOTHING. Well, if not worse than nothing. As one person once forgot to muster all his dependents ; so another may forget to command his vassals. Should a “ *discussion*” end like the “ *discussion*” of 1782, what is the consequence ? Ministers must either resign their places or their honour. They cannot serve God and mammon. They cannot at the same time serve their country and the

borough faction. If that faction is to remain, the new ministers must either deliver up the people again, to the iron rod of the unprincipled apostate, or they themselves must become apostates as base ; for "*a wise and virtuous administration*," the borough faction will never endure : indeed it cannot. When fire and water come in contact, they cannot exist together ; the fire either licks up the water and continues to burn ; or the water prevails, and puts out the fire. But if the proper conditions be entered into ; if it be agreed, that *the matter of reform shall be left in the hands of the minister, to be disposed of as he pleases*, we know that he may then equally despise the *faction behind the throne* and the *faction of the boroughs* ; and that the standing army of parliamentary mercenaries may be broken, disbanded, and dispersed with contempt. If he have *carte blanche* he cannot be resisted. If he be firm and steady to his own honour and to the people, he cannot be counteracted, without having in his hands the honourable means of counteracting counteraction, and triumphing over perfidy.

To know that **PARLIAMENTARY REFORMATION** is a *sine qua non* with a patriotic opposition, would be highly gratifying to the people. For a call into action the people are impatient ; an efficient staff at head quarters they desire to see ; and to be well officered wherever they shall stand forth, is their wish. The rest belongs to themselves, and they are ready for their duty. Emulous of their naval brethren who incessantly seek, and know how to subdue, the combined enemies of their country at sea ; the people at land, desire only to meet, that they may subdue, the combined enemies of their freedom. There is no need to metamorphose a single parish officer into a recruiting serjeant : at the voice of the sheriffs, the people will repair to their *Runnimeads*, to hew the borough fiend in pieces before the spirit of the constitution, as "*Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal*." The same indignant mind which lately exhorted to chop off an offending claw, still breathes and burns for a completion of the work ; for the annihilation of the criminal system.

Had I not other and substantial grounds for my opinion, still I should thus argue, because I am a man and an *Englishman*, because I have the same nature, and was born to the same constitutional inheritance, as other men and other *Englishmen*. If I feel according to the law of my nature, and reason according to the principles of the constitution, I know that such feeling and such reasoning must, by being known, become general. That those principles may gain on this occasion applicable method and force, I have, as you see, my Lord, "written a book;" which "mine adversary," and the adversary of the constitution I hope will endeavour to decry; for next to the commendation of those who value that constitution, the enmity of base men who set about to destroy it, is the most desirable praise; and I shall not easily be persuaded that my book merits this praise, unless it shall incur that enmity.

I write at a period, and on a subject, when the success of my book will have comparatively little dependence on reviewers of any description. Unless anti-constitutional reviewers can prevent the patriotism of the country appearing in public meetings, to abuse my book will stand them in little stead. If in the terse form of popular resolutions, public virtue shall circulate its principles, the instruction, the spirit will be electrically felt by every man without exception who either reads or thinks. I shall have gained my end, if I shall have contributed to give method and force to the proceedings of early meetings. If good they will be taken as models by those that follow; and the flame of reform will burst out, first here and then there, till it run through the nation. At every new burst of the patriotic fire, public spirit will grow more and more ardent, more and more conscious of its powers.

A mere book might obtain the approbation of honest men, who sighing over *the state of the nation*, and breathing useless wishes for amendment might lay it down again in despair: but if DUKES OF BEDFORD, if the leaders and luminaries of their country, in the genuine spirit of English liberty, energetically promote on the same principles popular meetings through the land, then, in the shape of resolutions, those princi-

ples are instantly changed from a dead letter to a living spirit. No longer the mere opinions of an individual, attended with doubts of practicability,—ceasing to be unembodied notions of desirable things, little to be hoped for, and becoming real operative acts of our fellow-citizens with whom we are in perfect sympathy, they are now examples we burn to imitate, and deeds we are emulous to excel; they are sanctions supporting us in our duty against corrupt influence exerted to deter and to destroy us; assurances that our rights shall no longer be withheld, nor our property be transferred to a usurping faction; they are pledges that an *English* people shall no more be insulted by official arrogance; and that the time is at hand when their moral feelings shall not be shocked, nor their sense of decency outraged, by spectacles of loathsome prostitution in a house, which ought to be an unsullied object of their respect and veneration: in short, virtuous resolutions of public meetings, are the efficacious stimulants to patriot exertion, and the healthful gales that waft the purifying flame of constitutional reformation, and a reviving public spirit, over a drooping nation.

In generating a spirit of patriotism, public political meetings, provided they be honestly dealt with by those who propose the subjects of consideration, and the matter be judiciously stated, infinitely surpass parliamentary debates. These carried on by persons with whom the mass of society are not on a level, and heard only at second hand, excite, except on very critical occasions, but an imperfect sympathy; whereas those, in which the people themselves are the actors, have every requisite for causing the most powerful enthusiasm. He who personally listens, who personally applauds, and votes, and is the actual associate of the champions of liberty, and a real principal in the deliverance of his country, shares and feels, and tastes the glory of the triumph.

Not believing in any surrender of a besieged tyrant driven by his crimes to desperation; or in any conquest except that of direct breach, and storm, and overpowering force; so I hold it to have been fortunate that

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the *Addington* part of the ministry has retired, since now a powerful association of ideas, and all circumstances alike will conspire to arouse an injured people; for in the person of the commander of the body to be attacked, must not the nation see at once the supple slave of the *Faction behind the throne*, the vile instrument of the *faction of the Boroughs*, and the unprincipled *apostate from reforming virtue*; who is equally an enemy of the Crown, an enemy of the constitution, and an enemy of his country?

LETTER XXVII.

MY LORD,

IMPATIENT as Mr. Pitt and the factions have been for the call of the *French* armies from the coast to the *Rhine*, their joy at this event may find a sad counterbalance of disappointment, in its effectually silencing them, as to the unfitness of the time now chosen for making a reform of parliament, and a removal of ministers, subjects of public discussion. Invasion being now removed to a distance, their objections to the time must now be the mere repetition of nonsense a thousand times urged, and a thousand times refuted: and to us this diversion of the *French* armies furnishes an interval of repose peculiarly favourable to our undertaking; an interval which we shall be greatly deficient in our public duty if we neglect.

We live, my Lord, in awful times; and we seem by this very event, to be warned by Providence to provide ere it be too late, for our ultimate security, by a complete revival of our constitution, in all its energies, civil and military. After several years of war and bloodshed, which

have annihilated a *French* monarchy, raised up a *French* republic, then an oligarchy, and finally an empire, and which have been so fruitful of changes to other kingdoms and states, *Europe* is probably but in the beginning of her political convulsions. When her combined despotisms attempted to devour the new born liberty of *France*, the babe, for their punishment, was miraculously changed into a serpent of their own species, more potent than they; and its now swallowing them all, would be a less miracle than its own origin.

What, in that case, or in the event of the new confederacy being foiled and laid prostrate, must be our situation if not previously armed at every point? Can any patriot statesman look forward to such a possibility, and not honestly join in restoring the constitution to full vigour and energy, by a rigid adherence to its genuine principles? Evasions, or palliatives, of whatever kind, or from whatever quarter, must be the very dotage of folly, or the last excess of faction; they must be either causes of our contempt, or objects of our detestation. All in turn appeal to the constitution. They alone are not impostors, who really make it the guide of their actions. Your Grace and Mr. Fox, and Mr. Grey, stand on a rock of adamant. On that rock, in the cause of parliamentary reformation, you may "wield the democracy of *England*," and save your country both from *France*, and from a worse enemy. Be firm and you must succeed.

If in this second continental coalition, there be less of wickedness, than in the first, are we sure there is more wisdom? On the former occasion, the attempt was encouraged, by *France* exhibiting the weakness of a child with the ignorance of a *sans-culotte*; she is now known to possess the strength of a giant, wearing the head of a *Machiavel* and the arm of a *Cæsar*. Have her opponents gathered strength from defeat, or caught enthusiasm from humiliation! Is *England* after expending about three hundred millions, and being put under the necessity of taxing the income of the landowner, the capital of the trader, and the salt of the poor; and remaining still subject to a profligate waste

of her resources in jobs and peculation, now better able to subsidize their mercenaries than at the first onset?

By the admirers of this new enterprise, a stress was at first laid upon directing the war *personally* against the new Emperor and King; of exciting desertion from his standard, and civil war against his sovereignty; and upon offering the people of *France* a *Bourbon* in exchange for a *Buonaparte*. I should as soon, I confess, attempt to seduce a *French* soldier, by offering him an emetic, in exchange for his brandy; or to excite a *French* peasant to rebel, by telling him he might become a *Bohemian* or a *Muscovite slave*, ranking with the cattle on the estate, instead of what he is; a native of the *great nation*, who probably considers war from *Austria* as the rebellion of a vassal state.

To Mr. *Pitt*, on the principles upon which in 1793, he rushed into the war, this new confederation will be a subject of boast, and a straw he will catch at in his despair to prevent sinking by his personal demerits; but, on the principles which attach me to the constitution of *England*, according to my views of the "*deliverance of Europe*," advice similar to that I have always given my country, I should have given to the governments of *Austria* and *Russia*, *Sweden* and *Germany*; 'Stay at home until you have given political liberty to all your states, and put arms into the hands of all your people. If, after that, you take post on the frontier of *France*, *Frenchmen* may then possibly discover that *they are slaves*, and that *you are their friends*. But, having once done as I advise, you will certainly be saved the trouble and expence of a military march; because you will have gained the hearts of your own subjects; and have made their countries *worth defending* by themselves, and *impenetrable* to an enemy: the charm, by which *France* has now the means of mischief, will be dissolved; the spell of her enchantments will be broken; when she cannot overturn or annoy other states, her activity and ambition must find its exercise in the improvement of her own, and in a rivalry in the arts and ornaments of peace; and the good you are now so generous as to propose doing the *French* nation, by improving their government, at the expence of the lives and fortunes of your

own people, will be better done by the *French* people themselves in their own way.' How simple and how potent towards human happiness, are those principles of political liberty which God has written on the heart of man ! But if we must have intercourse and alliance with arbitrary potentates, let it be as little as possible ; and let us not, by the corrupting influence of such connections, gradually lose sight of the true principles of government, of the true foundations of national strength, and of the true means of national security.

We live, I repeat it, in awful times. On the one hand, I do not see in the empire of the *French* any symptoms of decay, from internal disease, or natural decrepitude ; but on the contrary, all the vigour of it's youth ; while on the other hand, I do not discover in it's assailants, such free nations as broke in upon the overgrown and enfeebled empire of the *Romans*. *France* is not a magazine of wealth ; nor are her continental enemies a torrent of independent invaders lured by her riches, and impelled by their own insatiable desire of rooting out her inhabitants, and planting themselves in their place ; but mere armies of slaves or hirelings, employed by their despotic masters in the war, merely to curb the ambition of a rival power, and to restrain *his* despotism, that *their own* may not be narrowed in its range. In this view of the case, is there any thing to encourage our hopes ? Are we more likely to abridge, or to augment, the power of *Napolean* ?

But let us suppose that the confederate war was to be conducted by the principal sovereigns in person ; and that a *William* the third, a *Charles* the fifth, and a *Peter* the Great were those sovereigns. Even in that case, would a confederacy now, promise more than it did in 1792 ? At that time, besides her natural internal weakness, *France* was confined within her former limits ; but what an extension she has since experienced ! What countries ! What population ! What naval ports ! What military positions ! What a facility of passing the barriers of *Austria* ! Her whole domain now within a ring-fence ; her force undivided ; her strength concentered and consolidated ; her resour-

ces for the war all within her own bosom, and her supplies moving on radii within her own circle. Where lie the dominions of her assailants? At the extremities of *Europe*. Before they can come even into contact, their armies have immense regions to cross, and oceans to traverse. If *France* meet with a check, she retreats upon herself, and at every step grows more dense and impenetrable: but if the allied armies retreat in any other direction than that of *Vienna*, at every step they are more liable to dispersion and destruction; and a retreat upon the line of *Vienna*, would be ominous.

Again: in the conduct of the war on the part of *France*, there can be no diversion of object, no division of interest, no difference of opinion, no jealousy to weaken counsel, not any loss of time or derangement of operation, on a change of plan; one mind conceives, one will directs all; and one hand governs the main spring of the whole machine: how different would be the case, even under the sovereigns I have named! And could we, even under such conductors of the war, flatter ourselves with hopes of humbling a *Napoleon*?

Do we not remember how the *Prussian Frederick*, in the seven years war, foiled the combined powers of *Austria* and *Russia*, apparently able to have eaten up his armies and annihilated his kingdom, and that he arose more powerful from the struggle? But a *Frederick* of *Prussia*, compared with a *Napoleon* of *France*, is a mere cat, compared with a mighty tyger?

If under the supposition of a confederate war, conducted in person by three such sovereigns as I have mentioned, we are not warranted in expecting much success, what are now our prospects? What are now our hopes? Are they derived from the personal penetration and energies of the existing sovereigns, in the selection of their generals, in the choice of their ministers, and in the tight hand held over them? At home, I shall go no farther, than to appeal to the administration of *Mr. Pitt*. Compare the nation's present condition with its situation on his accession to power. Bring his conduct to the test of the constitution. Might do we discern but ruinous counsels, and daring violations

of our liberties and laws. But do we perceive that on these accounts he less enjoys the partiality of his sovereign?

As to the emperor *Alexander*, he is generally esteemed a well meaning gentleman, not deficient that I know of in understanding; but the emperor *Francis* is understood to be without a capacity for selecting either his ministers or his generals. From his personal amusements, we can have no conception of imperial occupations; so that with the most amiable dispositions, he may have been betrayed into the war, by a *faction behind his throne*, or by a minister whose influence he cannot resist.

Where, then, have we any solid grounds of confidence, that we shall prosper in this new confederate war? Are they derived from the talents of Mr. Pitt as a war minister? Or his experienced wisdom in the means of delivering *Europe*? Or is nothing more necessary, than his commissaries in the *Austrian* and *Russian* camps, to see that we have in the field the number of troops for whom we pay our money? Is the war to be planned, by the aid of couriers, in the cabinets of *London*, *Vienna*, and *St. Petersburg*? And managed by such generals as have most interest in those cabinets? Perhaps the circumstance that in the cabinets of *Vienna* and *St. Petersburg*, there are statesmen who can a second time embark in such a war with Mr. Pitt, may not create any very strong persuasion, as to the wisdom of the undertaking, or the fidelity of the advisers.

As under no *English* administration which I can picture to myself, could I approve of such a war, unless instantly accompanied by radical reform at home, both civil and military; so, as we are embarked, and it must be prosecuted until we can arrive at peace, here we have an additional motive of the greatest weight and urgency, for an immediate reform and change of ministers, unless we are prepared to submit to something far worse than the peace of *Amiens*. But, looking to the ultimate failure of the war; to the additional aggrandizement of *France*, and to our additional impoverishment, as possi-

bilities at least, if we do not immediately prepare for our self preservation, by *interesting in the constitution the mass of our population ; by freeing our government from all suspicion of corruption, and all imperfections of injustice and oppression ; and by completely arming the people on the true principles of the constitution*, it will not be our navy that can protect us against the impending storm ; and we must expect as bloody a struggle on *English* ground for existence as a state, as that which was experienced under *Alfred* ; but where is the *Alfred* to carry us through it ?

If indeed we are already bound by treaty, if the national honour be already pledged, and we must proceed with this continental war, let it then, so far as we are concerned, be a war of good faith with our allies, and of energy against our enemy. By our honour, and our vigour, let us set a right example to our confederates. Let our exertions be commensurate to our best means. Let us co-operate with a powerful army : and let us learn the only true secret of having at all times such an army at our command. It is not to be permanently had, by making tools of the nobility and country gentlemen, in raising a nominal militia, and then, by gross fraud and swindling, to rob the country of a defensive force it has raised at immense expence : It is not to be had by the pettyfogging projects of a financier, to extort from the parishes either men or money, on a plan utterly foreign to *English* ideas, or to *English* modes of government : It is not to be had, by treacherously evading the simple, grand and truly incomparable system of arming prescribed by the constitution ; and substituting in its stead, the perilous novelty of a volunteer army ; which, viewing it with a constitutional eye, that looks for order, energy, and permanence, we see to be a military rope of sand ; adopted on a principle, insidious to the patriotic ardor of *Englishmen*, and hostile to liberty ; as well as treasonable to the state, by exposing it eventually to the direst calamity, if not to subjugation. To Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas (now Lord Melville,) we owe the first introduction of this INNOVATION, a circumstance which, will not operate in its recommendation ; but to such ministers we must look

in vain for the true basis of a disposeable army for foreign service; which is no where to be found but in a complete *ROSSE COMITATUS*; "for, out of an armed, and warlike population, regular armies, at the disposal of the crown, as spontaneously grow, as bursts from the wide branching arms of our native oak, a luxuriant foliage."¹

It is now, my Lord, two years, since I published the concise work from which these words are quoted; since which I have carefully attended to every thing published, and every thing spoken in parliament, on the subject of our defence; and to some works touching our army. I have been particularly observant of what has fallen from military men, ministers, and legislators; but more especially from "An old Officer," from Sir Robert Wilson, General Stewart, and the Duke of Richmond;² from Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Colonel Crauford, and Mr. Windham. At present, I have only to entreat of every soldier and every statesman, that, before he exercises any invention, or indulges in any favourite system, or falls in with the views of any party in the state, he will, with the immortal Sir William Jones, make himself completely master of THE MILITARY BRANCH OF THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION. When he shall have so done, he will see the means of sending to the continent the largest army our population can furnish, and our property pay, and at the same time of acting upon a system of home defence, "by which the most energetic invasion, of that energetic despotism [of France,] might be defeated with as much ease, as a well armed city quells a paltry riot in its streets."³

Considering that but few copies of the *Ægis* remain unsold, and that I have not in any subsequent publication, nor in any parliamentary speech, met with a single

1. *England's Ægis*; 59, published by Phillips. Having giving to the publisher, the copy-right of this Essay, I have no other interest in recommending it to the serious perusal of my countrymen, than that arising from a wish to preserve our common liberty, and existence as a people.

2. The essays of all these persons, are published by Egerton.

3. *England's Ægis*, 49.

argument to shake the military system of the **ENGLISH CONSTITUTION**, as it is there unfolded, I am the more confirmed in my ideas of its excellence; and shall hope, when I may have health and leisure for publishing a second part to that work, to remove prejudices; to expose the mischiefs of *evasion*, which cause the present evil, and which may be fraught in future with consequences the most dreadful; and to satisfy our statesmen that, as honesty is the best policy, so a close adherence to the constitution is by far the easiest, the cheapest, and most infallible method of obtaining and upholding a regular army, not one soldier of which, after the system shall be completed, need be detained at home for our defence.

As it is far more probable that it suited the policy of *Napoleon*, that the emperor *Francis*, should be more forward than himself to take the field, than that the forming and advancing of large armies should have escaped his vigilance; and as the fate of the *Tyrol* and the *Venetian State*, will depend less on early marching, than on able generalship and good fighting; let us not be surprized if those territories should shortly be in possession of *France*.

Might not *Napoleon*, then, by offers of a separate peace, compel *Austria*, and induce *Russia*, to be quiet again? Might not the jealousy of *Russia*, concerning *Genoa*, be appeased by something in the *Mediterranean* of more value for herself? And might not prospects still more alluring reconcile her to the ambitious projects of *France*? Having no fears of each other for their own safety, what are the obstacles to a cordial co-operation, between an emperor of *Russia*, and an emperor of *France*, in objects mutually gratifying?

As for *Austria*, having no naval means of rivalling the other great powers, she is destined to sink into a subordinate rank; and we must not be surprized if *Russia* and *France*, should soon discover the means of advancing, at her expence, their own aggrandizement.

In case of such a separate peace as I have imagined possible, with *Venice* and the *Tyrol*, and perhaps *Naples* also annexed to the dominions of *Napoleon*, what are we next to look for? A separate war with

England, for more than two years past, having furnished him with a pretext of keeping on foot, and gradually augmenting armies for a continental war, while such a war, will now again increase those armies to a much greater magnitude, he will perhaps ere long be enabled to renew his plan of invasion, with additional strength in land forces, and his naval means also increased by the *Venetian* marine.

Short as might be the confederate war, our expence in furnishing a large army very distant from home, and in subsidizing our allies, would have weakened our own pecuniary resources; and in this condition we might be called upon to contend on our own shores, single handed, with the numerous and immense armies of *France*. With these prospects before us, our unfortunate and betrayed country, is still sacrificed to the traitorous policy of the faction behind the throne, to which we have seen Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas (now Lord Melville,) then Mr. Addington, and now Mr. Pitt again, all criminally subservient. At the demonstrable hazard of the most ruinous calamities by desolation, and leaving even the subjugation of our island to depend on the chance of war, these ministers, notwithstanding our new and unexampled danger, and a danger every year increasing, have persisted in not restoring the military branch of our constitution; when every wise and virtuous statesman must see it to be an imperious duty to give a well regulated, permanent, military energy, to every particle of our physical strength, which can on no other principle be effected.

But let us look a little farther. If Mr. Pitt and a borough parliament shall continue to govern this country, and its system of military defence shall not be radically changed, it must be the evident policy of *France*, first, to sever from us our allies, and then to continue the war. By these means she would hope to accelerate the ruin of our finances, and to attack us with a force so gigantic, and at so many points at once, as effectually to bring the war into our island.¹ Whatever

1 "Had it been the first care of Mr. Addington's administration, to have seen 1,200,000 men armed, as proposed in these pages, (where the work is only a second edition, of what was published

might be the result of this plan, she knows she could at any moment totally withdraw herself from that species of war, whenever a continental object should make it either necessary or convenient.

Such an *English* war would not for a moment interrupt *Napoleon* in organizing and consolidating, by political and military arrangements, his newly acquired territory of the *Tyrol* and *Venice*. Should the present struggle leave him so aggrandized, and likewise end in the establishing of a good understanding between him and *Russia*, would he not soon discover that the repose of the civilized world was not yet so well provided for as he could wish? Having annexed to *France*, *Helvetia* and the *Grisons*, the *Tyrol* and *Venice*, might he not think it a necessary guarantee of that peace and repose which are the objects of all his labours, that he should occupy all the south west part of *Germany*, *Austria*, and *Hungary*, taking the *Danube* for his new boundary from *Basle* and *Ulm* to *Belgrade*? And if, under the circumstances we have supposed, he should judge such a measure expedient, who could then oppose him with effect, if *Russia* were to connive at the aggression.

His compacted empire, bounded by the *Rhine* and the *Danube*, would then come in contact with that of the grand Signior; which no doubt would be extremely gratifying to him; for it is for ever present to the mind of this modern son of *Jupiter Ammon*, that between *Belgrade* and *India* there are but two powers, those of *Turkey* and *Persia*. Provided this emperor of the west, and his brother emperor of the north should continue on good terms, they would then have before them an open field for an amicable race of ambition. They might make as easy a partition of *European Turkey*, with the *Danube* as their line of separation, as we re-

“early in 1799,) he would not have needed to have made an humiliating peace, nor would he have been driven at all into a new war, and, in such a case for a *French* consul to have imposed upon his subjects the burthen of building gun-boats, and to have threatened us with invasion, would have been to have made himself the laughing stock of *Europe*.” *England's Egis*, 58.

member to have been made of *Poland*; and if on such an occasion the eastern part of *Hungary* should be paired off, I see not how the hemmed-in emperor of *Austria* could help himself.

What might be the farther joint projects of *France* and *Russia* it is not possible to foretel; but perhaps it might not by any means be impracticable, having left the grand signior in quiet possession of his *Asiatic* dominions, to convert him and the Sophi of *Persia* into auxiliaries on an expedition to *Indostan*; on which occasion the invading armies, as they approached the *Indus*, gathering like a rolling snow ball, by an accession of new auxiliaries, furnished by the king of *Cabul* and the *Mahrattas*, would doubtless pour over *India* a resistless torrent, blotting out for ever all traces of *English* dominion.

Every view, then, we can take of *the state of the nation*, and every prospect which opens to the eye of foresight, speak with one and the same voice, imperatively bidding us, whether we would prepare for the struggles that approach, or for averting the calamities which threaten, TO CHANGE THE MINISTRY, TO REFORM THE PARLIAMENT, AND TO RESTORE TO FULL VIGOUR AND ENERGY THE MILITARY BRANCH OF THE CONSTITUTION.

THE END 

APPENDIX.

A LIST of Statesmen and Philosophers, of distinguished Patriots and Men of Literature, conversant with public affairs, who, according to authorities in possession of the Author, and of a literary friend, have expressed themselves in favour, either of a fair representation of the people, or of short parliaments.

Abingdon, Lord, 1716
Anglesey, Lord, 1716
Ashburnham, Ld. 1716
Aylesbury, Ld. 1716

Bedford, D. of 1797
Bathurst, Ld. 1716
Batley, Jer. 1
Baynes, J. 2
Belsham, W.
Berkshire, Ld. 1716
Bingley, Ld. 1716
Bristol, Ld. 1716
Bruce, Ld. 1716
Bigge, T. 3
Blackstone
Bolingbroke
Boothby, Sir B.
Bromley, R. A. 4
Buchan, Ld.
Bentley, — Esq. 5

1 Author of an admirable Letter to Mr. Wyvill, in 1780.

2 Author of the third Address of the Society for Constitutional Information.

3 Author of the Economist.

4 Author of the Memorial of the Deputies, 1780.

5 Author of Political Meditations on the present state of our affairs. By an Anglo-Saxon, 1780.

Burnet, Bishop
Burgh

Camden, Ld.
Chatham, Ld.
Clarendon, Ld.
Carte
Chester, Bp. 1716
Compton, Ld. 1716
Churchill, J. 6

Dartmouth, Ld. 1716
Darwin
Day
Devonshire, Ld. 1694
Disney, Dr.
Dodson, Michael
Drennan, Dr.
Dunbar, Professor

Effingham, Ld. 1780
Erskine

Fenwicke, Dr.
Flood
Flower, Benjamin 7
Foley, Ld. 1716
Fox

6 A Vice-President of the Society for Constitutional Information about 1780.

7 Author of Remarks on the F. Constitution, &c. 2d. ed. 1792.

APPENDIX.

Francis
Frend, William

Gallway, Ld.
Guildford, Ld. 1716
Gower, Ld. 1716
Grattan
Grey
Grigby, Joshua, Esq.
Griffith, Edward, Esq. 1

Halifax, Ld. 1694
Hartley, David
Hereford, Bp. 1716
Holcroft
Hume
Hunter, Dr. (York)
Hollis
Hollis, T. Brand, Esq.
Hall Rev. Robt. Cambridge?
Hutcherson

Jebb
Johnson, Dr. 1688
Johnson, Dr.
Jones, Sir William
Junius

Kippis, Dr.
Knox, Dr.

Lansdowne, Marquis
Lauderdale, Ld.
Lee, John
Lindsey, Theo.
Locke
Lofft
Ludlow
Lloyd, Gam. Esq. 3

1 A Vice-President of the Society for Constitutional Information, about 1780.

2 Author of an Apology for the Freedom of the Press, and General Liberty, 3d ed. 1793.

3 Has corresponded extensively on Reform.

Macauley
Mackintosh
Macleod, N. 4
Mansel, Ld. 1716
Mason
Milton
Molesworth, Ld.
Mountjoy, Ld. 1716
Mundy 5

Norfolk, D. of 6
Northampton, Ld. 1716
Northcote, T. 7
Nottingham, Ld. 1716
Northmore, Thos. Esq.

Ogle, Dean

4 Author of Letters to the people of North Britain.

5 Author of Needwood Forest.

6 At York on the 19th. of December, 1782, his Grace nobly said—"No person could be against the petition, except the proprietors of purchased Boroughs. The conduct of Lord Gallway, the proprietor of the borough of Pontefract, who came there to support a measure, tending to overthrow his own interest, and of another gentleman, then present, H. Peirse, Esq. the proprietor of half a borough, ought to be held out as a reproach to those men who wish to stand well with the people, and yet support in parliament, with all their eloquence, the withholding from them those rights which time has robbed them of." See Wyvill's Papers. II. 67.

7 Author of observations on the Natural and Civil Rights of Mankind, 1781.

APPENDIX.

Osborne, Ld. 1716

Parr, Dr.

Peirse, H. Esq.

Petty, Sir W.

Phillips, Geo. Esq. 1

Pitt

Popple, Miles, Esq. 2

Powlet, Ld. 1716

Postlethwaite

Price

Priestley

Prynne

Ralph

Rapin

Rees, Dr.

Richmond, D. of

Rokeby, Ld.

Rous G. 3

Rochester, Bp. 1716

Rogers, Thomas, Esq. 4

Randall, Edw. Cambridge 5

Robinson, Rob. Cambridge 6

Salisbury, Ld. 1716

Savile, Sir G.

Sawbridge, J.

Sharp, Granville

Sheridan

Shapley, Bp.

1 Author of the Necessity of a Speedy and Effectual Reform in Parliament.

2 Author of. Consideration on Reform.

3 Author of an Essay on the Middlesex Election and the power of Expulsion.

4 Author of occasional Letters under different signatures in 1774, one of which is preserved in American Independence the Interest and Glory of G. B. p. 9.

5 Author of Freedom of Election the Law of the Land, 1802.

6 Author of Political Catechism, 3d. edit. 1784.

Shiple, Dean

Shrewsbury, Ld. 1716

Somers, Ld.

Somerset, Ld. 1716

Stevenson, Dr.

Strafford, Ld. 1716

Swift

Stuart, Dr. Gilb.

Shore, Samuel, Esq.

Shove, Alured Hen. Esq. 7

Tadcaster, Ld. 1716

Temple, Rev. W. J.

Thurlow, Ld.

Tooke, J. H.

Towers, Dr.

Trevor, Ld. 1716

Townsend, James, Esq.

Trecothick, James, Esq. 8

Wakefield

Walker, G. 9

Walker, Thomas

Watson, Bp. of Landaff

Warner, Dr.

Warton, Joseph

Weston, Ld. 1716

Weymouth, Ld. 1694

White, Holt 10

Wilkes

Williams, David

Willoughby, de B. Ld. 1716

Wyvill

Walker, Adam, Esq. 11

White, Dr. Snowden

7 A Vice-President of the Society for Constitutional Information, about 1780.

8 A Vice-President of the Society for Constitutional Information, about 1780.

9 Author of a work in Conic Sections.

10 Authors of Letters to Paley.

11 Lecturer in Philosophy.

APPENDIX.

Many eminent persons might doubtless have been added to the foregoing, had I recollected their names, or been acquainted with their sentiments: and the names of all those among the nobility, gentry, and clergy, who, since the subject of parliamentary reformation first engaged the national attention, have either entered into societies, or acted on committees, or voted in parliament for promoting that object, would swell the list to thousands: and could we further add all those *Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen*, whose attachment to the constitution engaged them in the same pursuit to sign, or to vote in public meetings for, petitions to the house of commons for such a reformation, the number would amount to hundreds of thousands.

Who, on the other side, I ask, have been the eminent writers? How many have been the *independent* and *disinterested* members of parliament? And where have ever appeared the people? Of distinguished writers I recollect none but *Jenyns, Young, Paley, and Burke*; the two first, *placemen*; the third, a well-paid *churchman*; and the fourth, ended his factious career a *pensioner*. Had these persons used arguments against a constitutional representation and short parliaments, from whence it were possible to believe they wrote from incorrupt motives, I should not have put additions to their names: what addition might be put to that of the author of "The Pursuits of Literature," if we knew it, I know not; but from the contemptibleness of his reasoning on the subject, it is probable he falls under one of the foregoing classes.¹

Add therefore to the slender band of such writers, *part* of our borough-holding peers, *part* of the few electors in our rotten boroughs, *part* of the house of commons, and *part* of those who are expectants of court favour, and I should then be glad to know, what there is in this view of the case to prevent an immense national majority saving themselves from slavery and misery, by an assertion of their rights? In the house of commons, the greatest division against the reform was under three hundred; but we are to remember that

¹ See Appeal, civil and military on the English Constitution, p. 227.

APPENDIX.

this is the very body to be reformed; and also to recollect how many of them were immediately interested in the baneful system; and how many were likewise in the open receipt of BRIBES in the form of office or emolument; circumstances under which, had any man of them given his verdict on *an ordinary jury*, he would for ever have incurred an indelible stain of infamy; he would have become an out-cast from society; one to whom no gentleman would have spoken, and in whose company no honest man would have been seen.

FINIS.

[Printed by B. Flower, Harlow.]

ERRATA.

Page 3	line 14	for letter	read	essay
25	— 24	after the word of	—	their
26	— 19	instead of ditto	—	Declaration of rights
28	— 13	for sooner	—	soever
31	— 24	for his	—	its
41	— 1	dele	—	for protection
82	— 11	(from bottom) dele	—	half
94	— 5	for that	—	which
	— 19	for the	—	a

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taken from the Building**

[illegible]



